



By
BEATRICE MARSHALL

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LUDGATE HILL ON MAY 29, 1660.

AN
OLD LONDON NOSEGAY

GATHERED FROM THE DAYBOOK OF MISTRESS
LOVEJOY YOUNG, KINSWOMAN BY MARRIAGE
OF THE LADY FANSHAWE

BY

BEATRICE MARSHALL

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

‘ Here’s flowers for you ;
Hot lavender, mints, savory marjoram,
The marigold that goes to bed wi’ the sun,
And with him rises weeping.’

The Winter’s Tale.

THE Gray House in Chancery Lane, with its quaint gables, mullioned windows, and carved timbers, must have been in its palmy days when the country was so near its gates that cowslip-fields and hedgerows of wild-rose and honeysuckle lay just behind the houses on the north side of Holborn. It was in its glory still in the middle of the seventeenth century, when those who dwelt beneath the roof of the old house during the Civil Wars heard one midnight the distant rumble of fiery Prince Rupert’s cannon in that hour of peril for the then Puritan capital when King Charles came within an ace of marching on London, where the rebellion against him had been nurtured, and was only prevented therefrom by

his own unhappy knack of letting golden chances slip.

London grew and grew (for the growth and vastness of London town have ever been the wonder and dismay of each succeeding generation), the country became farther and farther off, but the Gray House survived in Chancery Lane to bear its contemporary, the grand old gateway of Lincoln's Inn, company as long as it was able. It survived the days of Queen Anne. Coffee-house tattle was retailed in its panelled chambers, beaux and belles in powder and patches alighted from sedans at its door, and the link-boys hitched their torches to rests on its wrought-iron gate. But in the days of the earlier Georges the stately exterior of the Gray House began to show the ravages of decay. It had the appearance of being slighted, if not altogether deserted, by its owners, and wore a melancholy air of consciousness that it took up too much room, though long before this time its old-world garden had been buried under narrow, cramped houses of yellow brick.

At last its days were numbered, and the Gray House was doomed to go the way that most London buildings go sooner or later, even those that are hallowed by the hand of time and touched by the romance of the past.

When its doom was sealed, what remained of a once fine collection of pictures, books, manuscripts, antique gems, and intaglios, besides family records, were removed from the old house in oak chests heavily carved in relief and dating from the same period as its architecture, and were brought to the Grange at Kingston-on-Thames, where there was little room to receive the treasures. The pictures were sold, all but two charming portraits signed by the hand of Sir Peter Lely, which were cleaned and hung in the low-ceilinged drawing-room, beautifying and gracing it exceedingly. The books that overflowed their accommodation in the library lined the passages and bedrooms, and were piled on the attic floors, while the poor manuscripts and bundles of letters were squeezed into their chests again and consigned to a loft above the barn.

Years passed away, and there came a new mistress to the Grange at Kingston, whose maiden name had been Young. She soon grew to love the pair of portraits which represented her ancestress, a certain Mrs. Lovejoy Young, and her fair stepdaughter, Mistress Laurel. As they smiled at her from the canvas day after day, they seemed to become like real and living friends. How enchanting was even the very quaintness of their names, Lovejoy and Laurel!

The lady of the Grange spent many hours alone with her tambour-frame and harp, while her lord was in his counting-house in the city ; but since the pictures had come to beguile her solitude she never felt lonely. She liked to wonder and weave herself stories about them, to try and bridge the more than two centuries that divided her from them—she a lady of the early nineteenth century, in short-waisted sprigged muslin, sandal shoes, mittens, and mob-cap, who is as far off to us to-day as the ladies of Cavalier and Puritan days were to her.

Not often, thought she, had the artist who excelled in painting those wanton beauties of the Restoration whom she knew in the Lely room of Hampton Court, with their rakish eyes and sensuous charms, chanced on such a subject for his brush as this clear-eyed, pure-featured Mrs. Lovejoy, whose light brown hair, instead of hanging in the fashion of her day low about her neck in studied disorder, was drawn back from an intellectual brow, unfrizzed and dressed as simply as an early Italian madonna's. Indeed, there was something nun-like in the serene calm of this lady's bearing, despite the richness of her blue and ivory draperies with ruby and sapphire clasps, and the rows of orient pearls on her slender neck. Had she always looked so cool and tranquil and unruffled in those most ruffling and disturbed times? Her

spinning-wheel was beside her and a table on which lay a viol, an open music-book, and a bunch of lavender-heads. Did she spin flax for the household linen, whilst not far distant battles were being won and lost, distil lavender-water, copy music, and play on the viol? Yet those eyes with their clear, almost keen outlook, would not be slow to observe. What sights had they seen in the old London where they had first opened, and where they had closed for ever? What people, what changes? If only the soft-cornered, demurely smiling mouth would open and talk to the lady of the Grange, and satisfy the curiosity her presentment had awakened!

But still more curious, perhaps, was the lady of the Grange about the original of the other picture. How charming it was, this figure of a girl painted in the habit of a shepherdess, in the full bloom of brilliant youth and beauty, with pet lamb and be-ribboned crook, and in her hand a nosegay. Every hue of the rainbow was in the picture, and nearly every flower of summer gardens in the nosegay. The artist seemed to have abandoned himself to an unusual riot in colour when he painted the fluttering ribbon-knots of pink and yellow, the green bodice laced over an open chemisette of white, the gay striped kirtle, and red stockings and shoes. Above the dusky tree, against the trunk of which her

crook rested clouds raced across the blue sky, and one could almost feel the breeze that had set her skirts and streamers awlirl, and her wealth of hair flying behind her. A fair shepherdess in truth, though distinctly a counterfeit one—a shepherdess of the garden, like the flowers in her nosegay, not of the countryside; for had ever a genuine shepherdess, who danced on the village sward with her swain, so graceful and erect a carriage as this bright-eyed maiden with her high-bred air?

The portrait, so full of life and undimmed colour, was carefully painted in all its details down to each flower of the nosegay. Damask roses, sweet-williams, London pride, streaked gillyflowers and carnations, 'queens of delight, and flowers whose bravery, variety, and sweet smell joined together tyeth everyone's affection to like and to have them'; heartsease and marigolds that go to bed with the sun, bachelors' buttons, and fair maids of France. All these sweet-scented and sweet-named blossoms were in the nosegay, not thrown together haphazard, but placed in their mystic order, intermingled with their due relief of greenery, such as spikes of lad's love, marjoram, and rue.

Sometimes the lady of the Grange had fancied that the nosegay in the picture wafted a fragrance

over the room, but really it came through the open French windows from the flower border outside.

One hot, drowsy afternoon, when even bees were humming lazily, and the haymakers taking a nap under the sunk fence between the garden and the meadow, the lady of the Grange, in her low-ceilinged drawing-room, dropped the skein she was winding, and gave herself up to idleness. Her eyes rested on the two fair women of the pictures, of whose society she never tired, whose silent presence, the longer they hung there, exercised a growing, rather than diminishing, fascination over her.

‘I wish you could speak as well as smile,’ said she. ‘You both had lovely voices, I am sure, especially you, dear shepherdess. Your beautiful mouth has music in its curves. Did you pick that nosegay yourself from your London garden, and arrange it so carefully two hundred years ago? You loved flowers, birds, trees, and sunshine, and all beautiful things, I am certain of that. How many hearts did you break? Not more than you could help, for your own was too warm and generous. Your own true young heart—who captured it? Was it triumphantly stormed, or taken by stealth—so softly that you scarcely believed it was gone? Against whose conquering breast did it come flutter-

ing at last? I wish I knew. I should so like to know.'

Her eyelids closed, and she passed into the country of dreams. There it seemed perfectly natural to meet Mrs. Lovejoy out of her frame, trailing her azure and ivory raiment over the Elysian fields of dreamland, and Mistress Laurel, too, with her nosegay and curly pet lamb trotting at her dainty red heels. The lady of the Grange had her wish, and heard their voices—low, sweet, and dreamy, as if coming through a mist, they sounded to her ears, though they themselves, she thought, stood in the flesh close beside her.

'You would fain be nearer acquainted with our history? Then you must search among the papers in your loft,' said Mrs. Lovejoy Young.

'Yes, my mother's journal and my own letters must be there, lying in one of the carven chests,' added Mistress Laurel. 'There you may find answers, perhaps, to some of the questions you asked just now, and other things of greater interest. Mother was a better scribe than I was, or than most women of our day. Methinks what she writ will yet be worth anyone's reading.'

'No, no!' protested the fair scribe. 'It is so old now, and the ink faded. Even should you try, you'll scarce be able to decipher it.'

'Nay, for all its great age and faded ink, 'tis fresh and sweet as this,' and Mistress Laurel held forth her nosegay.

But as she did so, its bright flowers withered and fell from her hand. One flower she still held, but that had not been in the nosegay. In shape, in colour, it was strange and unfamiliar to the lady of the Grange.

'They call it fritillary,' Mistress Laurel said.

Her voice died in a sob, and she was no longer the brilliant shepherdess, but a sad, ghostlike figure, growing grayer and grayer, and fainter and fainter, till she and her companion vanished away.

The lady of the Grange awoke with a start of relief, for there, above her, smiling as radiantly as before, were the visions of her dream back again in their frames, and the nosegay bloomed unfaded in Mistress Laurel's hand.

In great excitement, and very wide awake now, the lady of the Grange followed up the clue her dream had given her. She ran out across the lawn through the plantation to the barn, and climbed up to the loft, catching her muslin gathers on nails by the way, unheeding, in her eagerness to unbury Mrs. Lovejoy's journal, and forgetful of her natural terror of spiders and rats. She lifted the heavy lids

of the chests, which were too full to be locked, and knelt on the hard, dusty floor to ransack them. The lengthening sunlight of the hot summer's day, lying aslant the loft in shimmering bars, illumined pitilessly the old, mouldering yellow papers, with their scrawls, and blots, and flourishes. In those days, to our gain, people did not burn their letters, and the uses of the waste-paper basket seem to have been unknown. Here were bundles and bundles of letters, stacks of old bills, deeds, rent-rolls, household accounts, and recipes in wild confusion.

The lady of the Grange rummaged long and perseveringly in this chaos, and was at last rewarded. She came on a book bound in vellum, discoloured by age, and spotted by damp, with a tarnished scutcheon on its cover. Attached to the book by a ribbon were three packets, tied up separately, and labelled: 'My husband's letters, writ to me before and after marriage;' 'Letters writ by my step-daughter Laurel from Bristol and elsewhere;' 'Sundry letters from my brothers, and sisters, and friends, chiefly from my husband's kinswoman and my own dear friend, Sir Richard Fanshawe's lady.'

Here and there in the book were many blank pages, but the written ones were closely filled with a fine, exquisite, clear penmanship, very characteristic of the young, madonna-like matron of

the picture. The lady of the Grange believed she could have identified the handwriting at a glance as Mrs. Lovejoy's, even if her sweet, quaint name had not been etched on the fly-leaf beneath true-lovers' knots.

'It is of antiquarian value and human interest,' said a gentleman of the Heralds' College who came to dine one night at the Grange, and to whom his hostess proudly displayed her precious find. 'Something might be made of it.'

'And I intend to make something of it,' the lady said—'a nosegay! Oh, I shall be so busy when the winter evenings come, gathering my nosegay.'

And when the winter evenings came, and the damask curtains were drawn, and the firelight danced on the two portraits in the low-ceilinged drawing-room, the lady of the Grange neglected her harp and tambour-frame, 'Clarissa Harlowe,' and the last new Waverley. She sat at her escritoire, pen in hand, with two tall wax candles on either side of her bent little head, making extracts from the old vellum-bound manuscript-book and the packets of letters. But, though she loved her task, she seems to have progressed but slowly with it, and then to have come to a standstill altogether. She bore children, and the changes and chances of this mortal life brought her sickness and sorrow.

So once more it was the fate of Mrs. Lovejoy's journal to be put away and forgotten.

Years afterwards it fell to the lot of a much later descendant to discover it for the second time, and she it is who now ties the nosegay together, in its present form.

AN OLD LONDON NOSEGAY

I

WRIT AT THE GRAY HOUSE,
CHANCERY LANE, 1642.

MY husband, Mr. Gabriel Young, brought me, his second wife, hither a week ago after we were wed in the Church of St. Olave, in Hart Street. At that church my father, Master Aurelius Howard, Doctor of Music, is organist. He is also a teacher of singing, and his method of training the voice is held in great esteem, and brings him pupils to the high, narrow house at the corner of Crutched Friars, where I was born and lived all my life till I married, which I never thought to do, but God ordained it otherwise.

Sir Oracle (in playful fondness I sometimes call my husband this, because in years and wisdom he is so much greater than I am, and seems to me verily an oracle) is scholarly in his tastes, and has a rare

knowledge of books. He possesses hundreds, yet doth go most days the round of the booksellers in Paul's Churchyard in search of new treasures, for he says a craving for Caxtons is not easily satisfied.

This morning as we paced together the walks of Gray's Inn, the winter air being very bright and clear, and every twig and blade of grass crystallized by the frost so that 'twas like walking in fairyland, Sir Oracle told me he had often in past days met the great Lord Chancellor Bacon here, and showed me the tree he had planted and the seat where he had once seen him dictating to his secretaries. Then Sir Oracle drew from the parcel he had carried from the booksellers this fair manuscript book, vellum bound, with his scutcheon in a lozenge of gold on the cover, and etched within on the fly-leaf my name beneath true-lovers' knots. He said he would have me write in it, when I was so minded, of what I see and hear and do in these times, which are so troubled and eventful.

Methinks I shall be so minded often, if not every day, and I was impatient to come in from Gray's Inn Gardens at once and make a beginning. I cherished a fancy long ago to keep a journal, but I never had leisure to keep ought but accounts and copy music in my father's house in Hart Street, where the burden of domestic cares fell early on me, the eldest daughter,

my mother having died at the birth of our little Jack.

From the attic dormer of my old home, above the housetops, is to be seen Tower Hill and the great Tower Prison, rising like a square grim giant against the sky, and a glimpse of the flowing Thames, with its freight of ships and barges ; but from the lower windows there is nothing to look at except the crooked houses opposite, with their pointed gables overhanging and shadowing the street. Here, as I sit at an oaken writing-cabinet in the sunny oriel of my closet in this new home, so fine and spacious that I can scarce feel *at home* in it as yet, my eyes may wander if I choose from the bowling-green and walled pleasance below, where the big carved sundial marks the flight of time, to the green fields, now frost-spangled, of Lincoln's Inn, and beyond I can picture the country road that doth lead from Holborn up to the windmills and wild heights of Hampstead.

It is a vastly pleasant prospect, yet I turn my head oftener citywards, thinking of those I have left at the corner house in Hart Street, and how they are faring without me.

It was always my reward and great pride to hear my father say that I was the mainstay of his house, and had filled with tender care and vigilance the place of mother to my motherless brothers and

sisters. And when he used to sigh and ask what he should do when the day came for me to desert the nest for a nest of my own, I vowed a hundred times such a day would never come; indeed, I was well content to be my father's right hand, and had no dreams of a husband for myself, though when I marked how fast Peg and Prue grew out of their kirtles, methought the time might not be far off when I should have to choose husbands for them. At the same time, I remember that I soundly scolded Peg for going with some other maids to a gipsy fortune-teller at Bartholomew's Fair to try and learn her destiny, which said she was to be wed to a flax-haired gallant. Now Peg has taken my place at home, and I hope she will keep up all her promises to me, and be sensible, and give up curtsying to the new moon through glass, counting all the white mares she meets, and other like follies. Both she and Prue play prettily on the virginals and harpsichon, and the boys can take their part on the bass and treble viols. It has been said in jest that my father must have taught his little ones to play some instrument ere they had learned to walk, their youthful proficiency being greatly wondered at and admired by gentlemen of the King's Chapel who now and then have visited my father.

Mr. Will Lawes himself has supped with us in

Hart Street, and with him once came his friend from Aldersgate, Mr. Milton, the poet, who said when little Jane and Jack joined in his father's madrigal they were like Raphael's angels, and their tuneful voices gave forth sweeter music than any instrument made by human hands. I, for my part, have ever loved, above all things, the rich, swelling notes of the organ, on which, so soon as I had the strength, my father did teach me to play. Often I snatched a half-hour to practise on the pair of organs in the church, and the producing of those rolling waves of harmonious sound filled me with ecstasy.

'Tis thinking of the organ that brings me to the story of my short wooing and the spring morning when, 'twixt the counting of linen and pastry-making, I found the time to run over to the church, taking little Jane and Jack with me. Jack was my blower, and Jane put her dolls on a tomb to bed, while I—overambitious, my father would have said—plunged into a mass of Palestrina's. Wrapped in the music, I did not hear footsteps in the aisle till Jane came and tugged my sleeve, and whispered, 'See, here cometh your dear Anne Harrison* and a tall gentleman.'

I looked round, and saw the vision of bright young girlhood that my eyes could but greet with

* Afterwards Lady Fanshawe.—ED.

pleasure, though I knew she would bid me at once be done with Palestrina. She came towards us beneath the gray arches of the pillars, with dancing step and dancing eye, her light curls aquiver, catching the stray sunbeams as she walked. The summer before Anne had lost her mother, the dearly-loved, gracious lady of our nearest neighbour of quality, Sir John Harrison, who, with his family, came from Hertfordshire every autumn to live the winter months at the great house with the courtyard and wrought-iron gates in Hart Street, which he rented from the Lord Dingwall. Till then Mistress Anne had been the gayest, wildest, sauciest romp in the world, and she came to town full of tales of her pranks and rides on bare-backed ponies in the country, which only to hear excited the amazement, and envy withal, of our London-bred Peg and Prue.

But after my Lady Harrison's death Anne had changed and become more sedate, and assumed at times an air so grave and sober for her years that she seemed a more fit companion and confidante for me than for Peg, who was more her age. She sought my counsel often in the management of household affairs, which, young as she was, she had taken on her shoulders, as I had done when my mother died. She would fain profit by my experience, she said, and I gladly gave her advice, though methought

there was a vast difference in her circumstances and mine ; for in her father's house was a great number of servants, and no scarcity of money, whereas we had but two serving-maids and a cook-boy, and 'twas a difficulty sometimes how to make two ends meet. Especially anxious had I been in this respect when it was necessary to equip my eldest brother, Roger, for his voyage to Aleppo, he being bound apprentice to a Turkey merchant. I was at my wits' end how to get him all the needful holland caps, handkerchiefs, and doublets, not to speak of thread stirrups, stockings, gloves, and cloth socks. And though Roger had complained that our house was too small for the number of children and musical instruments, and that he was often distraught with too much music, he would not be content to go abroad without a new guitar. But this was given him by his godmother, the widow Travers in Seething Lane, who doth profess an abundance of affection for my father's children, which they, suspecting 'tis for his sake rather than for their own, do not return very warmly.

Peg may safely be trusted, methinks, to keep Widow Travers at a distance.

Well, I must not wander, but will come back to the morning when I looked round, with my fingers still on the organ keys, and saw Anne Harrison

tripping up the aisle of St. Olave's. She left the tall gentleman far behind her, he having lingered to gaze at the kneeling stone figures of the Bayning brothers in their ruffs.

The best company I had ever met, mostly clergymen, had been at Sir John Harrison's, but this gentleman was not a clergyman, and a stranger to me.

'Tis my cousin Young,' explained Anne in a lowered voice, sweeping my hands from off the keys, and holding them in hers. 'He was so ravished by your sweet strains that I could not get him to budge beyond the church. Since his lady died of consumption in France he hath lived there mostly with his two girls, but now has come to attend, with my father, the trial of my Lord Strafford. He will much glory in making your acquaintance, Lovejoy.' Then, softening her voice still more, Anne added mischievously: 'He is in sore want of a second wife, for his daughters are becoming a handful, and you, dear Lovejoy, are so demure and sweet a personage, so skilled in housewifely arts, and in music withal, that if only you were as old as you seem, and he young, not only in name, it would be a suitable match.'

'Tut!' said I. 'Let us go without into the churchyard if you would banter.'

At this moment Mr. Young came forward, so Anne presented me to him as her very dear and cherished friend, Mistress Lovejoy Howard, daughter of that good musician Dr. Aurelius Howard, whose scholar she was on the virginals.

Before I could respond to the stranger's civilities, Jack, flushed and proud from his work at the bellows, would insist on claiming the wage I had promised him, which was marchpane and a manchet, to be divided 'twixt himself and Jane beneath the trees in the churchyard. With him dragging at my skirts on one side, and Jane holding her face in their folds on the other, in pretended shyness of Mistress Anne's coaxings, we went out by the south door into the April sunshine. Other children—playmates of my little brother and sister—flocked round the bench I sat down on, in the shade of the budding branches, where the rooks were cawing. Anne Harrison flitted over the sward, out through the gateway with the skulls on it, and left her cousin watching me as I distributed the dainties among the little ones.

In the broad sunlight I noticed that his hair was more silvered than my father's, and his brows lined and thoughtful, but, beneath them, the kindly eyes had something of youth in their hazel clearness. His sad-coloured suit was very rich, relieved by

velvet slashings and points of lace at the neck and wrists. He had a violet lining to his cloak, and a long feather curled downwards from his low-crowned beaver. I was unconcerned at his standing there while I fed the children with marchpane, and afterwards, when they clamoured for it, told some silly tales of dragon-slaying, hobgoblins, brave knights, and bewitched princesses. Had it been Anne's sparkish brother, Abraham Harrison, who stood and thus listened to me, I warrant, though I had been long acquainted with him, I should have been embarrassed enough. But in this strange gentleman's presence I felt an unusual ease and confidence, and 'twas as if I must have met and known him somewhere before. Not till later did I recall that a small picture of him by Sir Anthony Van Dyck hung in a room at Balls, in Hertfordshire, the Harrisons' country house, and whilst I tarried there last summer to bear Anne company for a few days in her sorrow, the painted eyes had seemed to rest on me, no matter in what part of the room I might be, with the same friendly, penetrating look as did the original ones in St. Olave's Churchyard.

He himself hath told me since that, with the sun glinting on my hair through the boughs, with little Jack in my lap leaning his gold, curly head against my bosom, and Jane beside me, the other neighbours'

children on the grass at my feet, I reminded him of some Madonna of Botticelli, and there and then he did resolve, if possible, to woo me for his wife.

Before the spring was out, Master Young had sat often in our narrow parlour, with its buff wainscot, and listened attentively to many an intricate fancy out of Queen Elizabeth's music-book, performed on the harpsichon by Peg and Prue. He would join, too, in catches and madrigals, for he is a musicianly gentleman as well as a scholar. He spoke to me of the two daughters being educated with their foster-brother in France, whither their mother had been taken for her health, and where she had died of consumption; and he said that the one could warble like a skylark, having a voice of wondrous sweetness and rare compass, while the other was voiceless, she being born deaf and dumb.

'How pitiful sad!' I said, lifting my eyes from the pile of mending before me. 'What is her name?'

'She was christened Margaret,' said he, 'but she hath been called Silence since it became certain she would never speak. Poor little Silence! Hers is a great and stormy spirit, which, when roused, some say, is like an evil demon; but her face is fair as any angel's.'

He sighed, and I met his eyes with tears of sym-

pathy in mine for his child's affliction ; then he drew his chair nearer to me, for we were alone in the room. The chicks were abed, the schoolboys at their tasks, and Peg and Prue had run upstairs to tend the row of flower-pots on the little wooden balcony in the gable. Their laughter and prattle came down to us through the open casement and mingled with the tinkle of the virginals from the study, where my father was busy with a pupil.

'Both my rogues,' Master Young continued, 'need a mother's firm and gentle guidance. None I know could give it them so excellently well as you, though you are but young in years. Sweet Mistress Lovejoy, will you be a mother to them and a precious wife to me?'

This was no lover to call forth blushing airs and bashful coquetries. I felt myself quite calm, and answered steadily :

'I would, but I have vowed never to leave my father ; indeed, sir, methinks they could ill spare me here.'

'Your father will let you cancel your vow, and has already granted me leave to steal his jewel if she consents to be stolen,' he said.

So my father knew, and 'twas his doing that Peg and Prue had scampered to the top of the house, that Tim did not come bouncing in to ask my help

with his Latin, and that Penelope, our old serving-woman, had refrained from summoning me to administer to little Jack a rhubarb draught ere he laid himself abed.

I did not give Master Young my answer till I had talked with my father. That night I asked him if 'twas indeed true that he was ready to part with me, after all.

'Ready? Nay, dear wench,' he said; 'but I would fain not think of myself and stand in your way if you have a mind to accept the suit of this courteous and Christian gentleman. He doth intend to live in London, though he hath estates in the country, so we shall not lose thee altogether, my Lovejoy. Truly you have been my comfort and the light of my eyes since your mother was taken from me. But shall I doom thee for that, fair flower of maidenhood, to wither on the virgin stem when an honourable man would have thee for his wife—and a rich man withal?'

I had not thought of myself in the light of a rich man's wife, and it did now flash across my mind how in such a position I could be of much benefit to those I loved. Belike, I might help to start the boys when 'twas time for them to finish their studies at Paul's School. Peg and Prue should not have cause to say any more they were ashamed to go into

fine company, inasmuch as they had no pretty gowns to hang on their backs ; my father should have new Greek lace-bands, instead of wearing them darned and darned till there was little of the lace to be seen ; Jane should have a handsomer family of dolls than she had ever boasted, and Jack look a royal boy in little coats of brocade for Sundays and high holydays.

But 'twas not for these things and his riches that I promised to be the wife of Gabriel Young. Had his fortune been ten times greater, he could not have won me without first gaining my love and trust. And, having done that, 'twould have been little odds to me if he had been poor or as old as Methuselah, as Anne Harrison said he was, in her jesting, lively way.

When she heard of my betrothal, Anne came to wish me joy, bringing with her a gift from her father and herself. 'Twas a wondrous fair knob of gold enamelled with tulips, set in a crust of small diamonds. The dear child hugged me, and said :

'I have played the matchmaker all unawares, Lovejoy. I spoke lightly that morning in the church, and little dreamed it would come true. If my cousin Young does not prove a good husband and make you happy, I shall be ready to die of remorse.'

She assumed so anxious a mien that I made haste to assure her she need have no fear, for I was happy enough, and looked forward to greater happiness still in being the wife of her cousin Young.

Then we mounted together to the top of the house and stood on our wooden balcony, for this was the 12th of May, the day of tragedy when Lord Strafford stepped from his prison in the Tower to lay his grave and noble head upon the block in the presence of vast multitudes of people. Rumours of a plot on foot the evening before to compass his escape had hurried on the fatal moment. During my quiet courtship much had I heard of the impassioned scenes of his trial from one who was a daily witness of them in Westminster Hall. He had told us of the long pleadings of the King's proud counsellor, of his appeal to his judges on behalf of his young and innocent children, and how at this point the voice of the great statesman (said to have a heart as hard as a flint by his enemies) was so choked with sobs he could scarce proceed.

That day my father, for once, would have no sound of music in our dwelling, and even Jane and Jack forbore to shout and laugh at their games, being sensible, young though they were, of that awful thing that had happened so near us out yonder on Tower Hill. We watched silently and sadly the great

crowds disperse, blackening the streets and lanes of the city in all directions. Men came by way of Crutched Friars even into our quiet street, hustling each other and whooping madly for joy, 'His head is off! His head is off!' Little Jane looked up inquiringly.

'Why are they glad?' she asked. 'They should be sorry, not glad, forsooth, that the Lord Strafford's head hath been cut off.'

'Ay, they should be sorry, not glad,' said Anne, with a flash of anger in her eyes. 'Had he been the worst of men, and working the ruin of the kingdom, as hath been said most falsely, they should not be glad.'

But they were glad, for bells pealed forth from towers and steeples, and at night the bonfires blazed skywards along Cheapside and Fleet Street, as if it were a merry festival.

In the country it may be possible, I have heard, to live one's daily round too occupied with the tasks of the hour to be interested in or even heed great public events. 'Tis different in London, as I, a Londoner born and bred, can testify. London is the heart of things, and those who dwell therein cannot help being strangely swayed by its throbs and thrills of emotion.

Methinks, if ever there is a time when a woman

can be pardoned for being engrossed with herself, to the exclusion of ought besides, 'tis on her bridal day, for then she seems to herself and all her loved ones a heroine—for one day at least. Yet on the cold gray morning in January that saw me wed, when I was driving away with my bridegroom from my home in Hart Street, I soon had occasion almost to forget I was a bride, and the little drama I had figured in, in coming sudden on something of that greater drama which the King was playing with his Parliament.

Our coach had to hold up in the street in a string of others, whilst the King came forth from the Guildhall to get into his. His Majesty's errand there had been fruitless, for he had come to seek his flown birds—those five Parliament gentlemen who ten days before had left the House of Commons when the King had gone thither to arrest them, and, escaping through the Speaker's garden, had taken boat for the city, where they now lay hid in Coleman Street. My husband, alighting to salute respectfully the King when he should pass, fell into converse with an Alderman of his acquaintance, who did say the Lord Mayor and Councillors had been so uncivil as to refuse to snare for the King his flown birds, and that His Majesty was in high choler thereat.

Just then shouts, some loyal, but more angry and mocking, from the citizens thronging the street, made me forgetful of my cloth of silver gown, and the tell-tale rice that Penelope and the cook-boy had hurled at me rattling in its folds, and I sprang on to the step of the coach to see the King.

No guards accompanied him, and he was almost unattended. His brows were drawn into a deep frown, and he walked with such little irritable steps that he seemed near to run into his coach. 'Twas in the lofty posture of his head alone that his kingly dignity was perceptible. As he drove away, some of the crowd ran after his coach, yelling, 'Privilege! privilege of Parliament!' and one, ruder and bolder than the rest, dared to toss a paper in at the window, with the cry, 'To your tents, O Israel!'

I recalled the picture I had seen on the mild day in November but two months agone when King Charles had come with his Queen to be feasted in the City after his return from making peace with the Scots. Flags and bunting had waved merrily against the soft gray clouds; the merchants had hung their richest tapestries and embroidered stuffs over the balconies, and every casement was decked with garlands and smiling faces. I had been with old Penelope a-marketing in Leadenhall, and to purchase ribands for Jack's garter-knots at a draper's

in Cheap, and from the doorway of his shop 'twas our good fortune to see the procession go slowly by. There were the Aldermen in their scarlet bravery, gentlemen on horseback, clad in velvet coats, with chains of gold, and in the midst their Majesties, who rid in an open equipage. The King had not frowned then, and the gay Queen, in a furred gown of blue and white, with pearls shimmering among her brown curls, had seemed to be laughing at two of the Royal children seated opposite—the Princess of Orange, small, grave bride of tender years, full of childish dignity, with her hands folded stiffly on her lap; and the little Princess Elizabeth, pale, and clear-cut in features as an ivory image, fragile and drooping like a snowdrop, yet most lovely and gracious withal.

Only shouts of 'God save the King!' had rent the air that day, and the lowering, resentful faces that lined the streets now had been absent.

'Where are they hiding to-day, all the loyal folk?' I asked Sir Oracle, as our coach at last moved forward; 'and whence have all these disloyal ones come from?'

'They are the same folk, sweetheart,' said he, 'and 'tis the same city of London. But the march of events hath changed the aspect of it. There is time in two months for the loyal to grow disloyal.'

‘And so there is hope that the march of events may make the disloyal loyal again very soon?’ I asked.

My Sir Oracle looked grave as he answered :

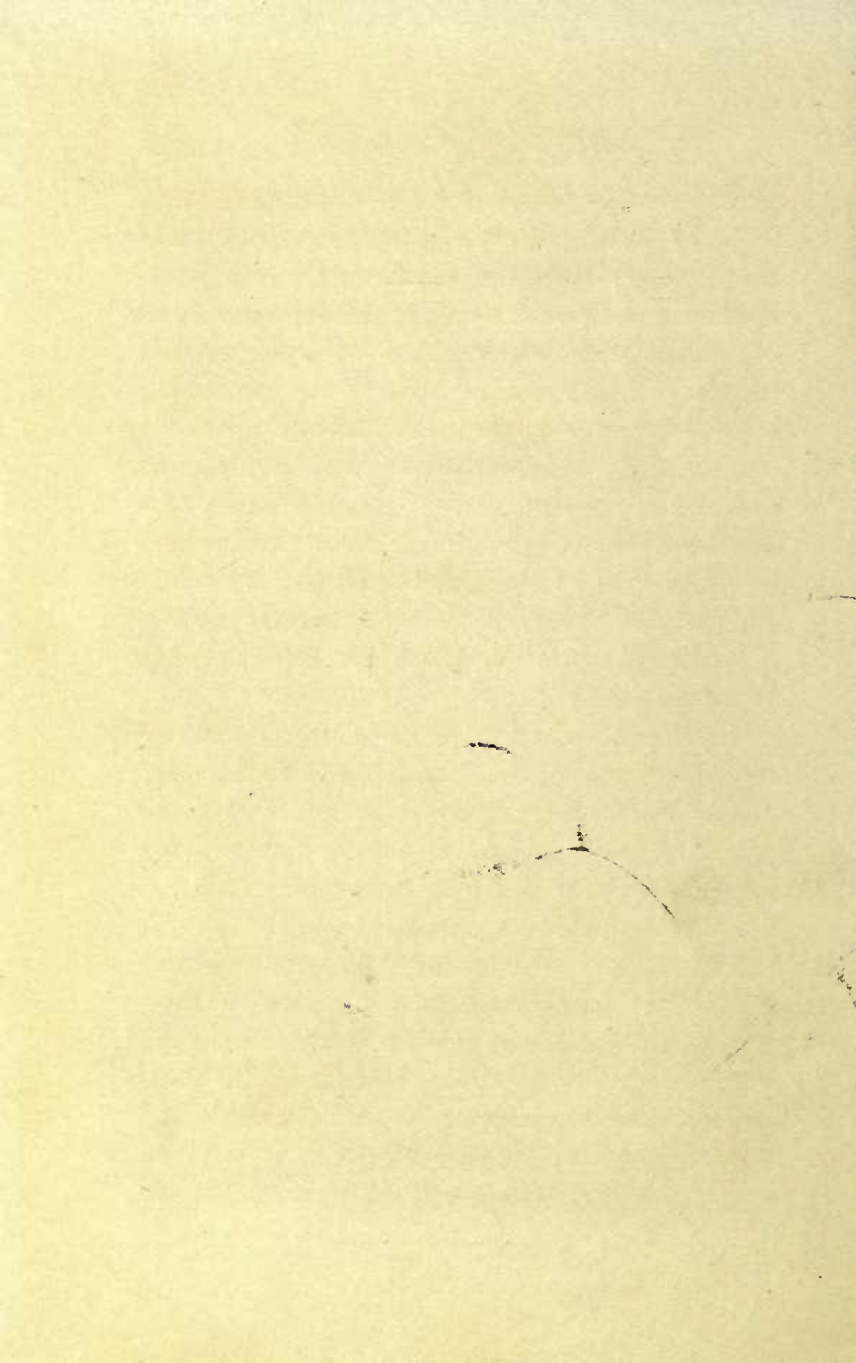
‘Nay, that will be a slower process, methinks, and God alone knows what may happen ere the pendulum swings back.’ Then suddenly he smiled, and exclaimed, ‘See, little wife, this is Chancery Lane, and we are at home.’

The next moment he had helped me to alight, and the steward and servants came forth to bid us welcome. As I passed beneath the portico of gray stone into the panelled hall, and my husband’s forefathers and their ladies looked askance at me over their steel cuirasses and starched ruffs, I realized I was come to be mistress over near as big a house and as many domestics as Anne Harrison, and felt not a little mindful of my responsibilities.

I had seen the house before, but my husband would fain have me go with him now unto all the rooms again to show me with a boylike pleasure how the chambers had been dressed up for me afresh with fair hangings, mirrors, and tapestries. In the velvet-room I must see the secret iron closet ’twixt the bedstead and the stairway; in the orange chamber the great chest that came from Nuremburg with figures in relief, said to have been carved by the hand of Peter Vischer; here a cabinet of gems, there rare



THE GRAY HOUSE.



gravings of the 'Dance of Death'—these and a host of other pieces that my husband has brought from his travels in outlandish towns when he was bound on foreign embassies. Longest did he linger showing me his books, which he doth esteem his greatest treasures; and, lastly, he brought me here to my own closet, with its carnation hangings of quilted silk and little China carpets wrought with coloured silks and gold thread, where I was glad to rest, for I was weary from going up and down passages and stairways. The women had unpacked my trunks and put out a loose smock for me to take my ease in, and I sat beside the hearth and held my hands before the flames.

'Tis almost unnatural not to be interrupted long ere this by Penelope coming in to announce some catastrophe in the kitchen, or to say that Master Jack is whipping his top with boys in the street, and will I whip him, and Jane hath torn her clothes again. I miss the little ones as sore still as the first night I left them; I miss the childish prayers they said at my knee, their hugs as I tucked them in their beds, the sound of their fresh young voices and sturdy footsteps. This house seems strangely silent. My husband has gone abroad to his bookseller's, and I hear no sound of the servants, whose quarters are on the other side of the courtyard.

But there will soon be young life here too, for in a few days, should wind and weather favour their journey, my stepdaughters, Laurel and Silence, are coming out of France by way of Dieppe with their gentlewoman and their foster-brother Hugh L'Es-trange.

That I may win their love and esteem and be unto them a good and discreet stepmother is my most earnest prayer.

Yet when I think of Silence and Gabriel's words concerning her—'hers is a stormy spirit; some say when roused 'tis like an evil demon'—I can but feel some fears.

II

January 11, 1642.

THIS fine frosty morning I bore my husband company to Temple Stairs, whence he took barge for Greenwich on his way to Deal to meet his children, who are to land by the packet-boat.

'Twas only parting for a short time, but he took, nevertheless, most tender leave of me, entrusting me to the care of Juan, his Spanish foot-boy, who attended us to the waterside. I stood at the head of the stairs waving my hand as the barge drifted off over the glittering water. The sun did shine as brightly as on a June day, and I never remembered to have seen so many barges, wherries, and sailing-boats abroad on the river. 'Twas rumoured this was to be a gala-day for the enemies of the King.

Unconsciously, 'tis true, it seems my lot to keep pace with what Sir Oracle calls the march of events. I was alive to the thrill of excitement in the air, and, as on my wedding-day, near to forgetting myself in

what was passing around me, for ere I had turned from the stairs the sound of drums and trumpets fell on my ear, and Juan said we had better tarry till the train-bands had gone by. They came in martial array rowing up the river, and acting as guards to the five gentlemen of the Parliament who, till to-day, had been in hiding in the City. These gentlemen were now venturing forth very boldly to Westminster, the King being gone from Whitehall to Hampton Court. 'The cat's away, so the mice will play,' I heard someone say. And then, as the long boats glided by in which were the five members and the Sheriffs of London, a great huzzah went up from the bystanders for 'King Pym' and Mr. Hampden. Mr. Pym's broad, fresh face wore a smile of triumph, but Mr. Hampden's, methought, was pale and sternly set. I liked his looks the better of the two.

Afterwards, leaving the waterside, with Juan following close at my heels, I came to cross the crowded Strand, and there some lads ran against me, and I chanced to encounter my schoolboy brother Timothy.

'Tim!' I exclaimed, 'Tim! have I caught you playing the truant?'

'Why, sister Lovejoy,' he said, 'I vow I scarce knew you in that red finery. You are quite the

brave lady, methinks, and may not go a-marketing now unattended.'

He cast a quizzing glance at the Spanish foot-boy.

'Tis all very well, Tim,' I said, 'but I asked you a question. Are you playing the truant?'

I would fain have looked severely on him, but could not for the life of me, so greatly joyed was I at the unexpected sight of a home face.

'The 'prentice boys have been given leave to make holiday to-day, and so some of us Paul's boys have taken it.'

'But Will is not one of them, I'll warrant.'

'Will is a bookworm, and heeds naught but what's in his books, and there's a world of things going on outside them. I rowed in a skiff with the train-bands from Tower Wharf to Temple Stairs, and would fain have gone all the way to Westminster, only I durst not come late to dinner. There's herb-pie for dinner to-day. I heard Peg order it.' Tim drew a sigh, as if his soul had been much torn asunder 'twixt his love of liberty and liking for herb-pie. 'Ay,' he went on, 'wouldn't I join the train-bands, and help to fight King Pym's battles, if I were but as old as our brother Roger!'

'You are a disloyal little scapegrace,' said I, 'to talk thus. Methinks 'twould please father better if

you minded your books, like Will, instead of scouring the town in the wake of the train-bands.'

Then I asked Tim how my father did and all at home, and he said 'twould take them pleasantly by surprise if I came to dinner, and saw for myself how they did.

'Prithee come,' he urged, 'and see how Peg apes the mistress by being horrid strict.'

He put his hand in my arm, and pulled me along; so I, yearning to see home again as greatly as if I had been away from it years instead of days, bade Juan take word to Chancery Lane that I had gone to dine at my father's.

'I'll be your gallant escort,' said Tim.

But the next moment he left my side to slide on one of the frozen rivulets. When he came back he shook the pocket I wore hanging on my wrist, and asked if the knotted silk purse Prue had made me was therein, and if it were full of crowns. He was in sore need of a certain new marble, he said, and had not been treated to the bear-pit or a puppet show for many a long day.

I could not buy Tim marbles, for not a shop or booth in the City was open. The Cross in Cheap was decked in holiday greenery, and streamers and garlands floated over the signs in Lombard Street. The 'prentices who had not gone to Westminster

were playing and scuffling in the gutter, or gathered in the side-streets and courts to watch performances of jugglers and tight-rope dancers, of whom there seemed plenty about, making hay while the sun shone. All the short-cuts Tim took were so familiar to me I could have found my way through them blindfolded. Yet familiar places appeared to me to wear a strange face to-day. Did I see them with different eyes because I was now no longer Lovejoy Howard hurrying home to take my place at the head of the dinner-table and to help the herb-pie, but Mrs. Lovejoy Young, coming as a guest to her father's house to see Peg in her old place 'aping the mistress by being horrid strict,' as Tim wickedly put it?

When we came beneath the crooked gables of Hart Street, the bells of St. Olave's sent forth a merry peal. 'Twas as if the bell-ringing and flying of flags were meant to welcome me, though I hated the thought of sharing in any way the triumph of the five Members who had that day so victoriously gained their point against the King.

Methought the narrow house had grown narrower as I entered it, and that there was scarce any room to turn round in the hall; but there was room, nevertheless, for the whole household to flock there to receive me boisterously, for Tim had run ahead

and announced my arrival at the top of his lungs, so that all Crutched Friars must have known I had come.

Jack and Jane embraced my skirts, wild with joy at seeing me, and my father led me to the table, and I sat on his right hand in the chair of state, which Mr. Milton and Dr. Child, and divers other honoured musical guests, had occupied when they supped with us in Hart Street.

‘Peg does very well,’ my father said. He nodded encouragingly towards the other end of the table, where Peg sat flushing and frowning for fear her dishes should not hold out.

‘Considering what a giddy pate she was wont to be,’ murmured Will the bookworm.

‘Peg hath whipped me once,’ said Jack, ‘because I falled down and did bleed here.’ He pointed to a triangle of plaster that adorned his forehead.

‘Nay, ’twas not for that he got a whipping,’ put in Jane, ‘but because he was naughty, and would run off and play with rude boys outside Mistress Travers’ house.’

‘Thereby hangs a tale,’ said Prue. ‘’Tis Baby Jack that hath betrayed the citadel.’

‘Eh, Prue! to whom and what citadel?’ asked my father; but not till he had hurried away to the church, where a pupil for the organ awaited him,

did Prue explain that Jack had been brought home bleeding by the widow, who had tended and plastered his cut herself, and had come every day since to see how the 'sweet cherub' was, and to doctor him with liquorice-water and other concoctions of her own making.

'In truth,' said Prue, 'she is now a tame cat in the house.'

'But 'tis not my fault, Lovejoy,' Peg did protest, hot and ashamed that I should learn the widow had gained so much ground under her régime. 'Yester evening I would not ask her to supper though she tarried on after Jack was abed.'

'Ay, she tarried on,' said Prue, 'even though I drummed on at "The Carman's Whistle" till I thought I should split her ears as well as the strings of the harpsichon; but she smiled through it and marked time with her foot withal, though I kept no time on purpose.'

'She hath told father Jane should not learn to play on the lute because it doth draw her figure awry,' said Peg, 'but I hope he will not heed her. Why should madam interfere in Jane's education?'

'Why, indeed,' echoed Prue; and both looked at me to abet them, as I had been wont to do when I shared in their secretly cherished distaste and dread of a possible stepmother.

But now I am a stepmother myself, though I scarce yet realize the position ; it somewhat alters my feelings, and I wonder whether the home-coming Laurel and Silence are thinking of me with a horror like to Peg and Prue's for Mistress Travers. I was at Hart Street till after sunset, and then returned to Chancery Lane in a hackney coach that Will fetched, since the citizens' enthusiasm waxing merrier towards the evening over their five heroes made it unsafe to go on foot.

The gable points and steeples of the City stood out black against a sky of clear orange, in which flashed the planet Mars. Here and there the unshuttered casements cast ribands of light across the street, but the Lord Dingwall's great house had darkened windows and a deserted aspect, Sir John Harrison and his daughter having taken up quarters for the winter this year at Montague House in Bishopsgate, near to the great fantastic carved mansion of that princely merchant, Sir Paul Pindar, a revered friend of my husband's. 'Tis said Sir Paul hath lent the King vast sums of money only recently, and presented the Queen with priceless jewels, there being no limit to his riches, as there is none to his loyalty.

The air struck piercing cold as I stepped from the hackney-coach, and it pleased me that it was in my power to give alms freely to some half-naked beggars

who crouched shivering beneath the lanthorns at the gateway. 'Tis a joy and a novelty to me to have money to give away. Hitherto money, owing to my dear father's scarcity thereof, hath ever been associated in my mind with saving rather than with giving.

The rooms were all aglow with great wood fires. Juan ran before me with a lighted torch up the shining oak staircase, for I would fain look once more into the chambers prepared for the travellers. My own hands had helped to deck them, and Laurel and Silence will have a bower fit for a queen.

The finest wrought linen sheets, sweet with the perfume of orris that I found in a press in the attic, lie on the two beds and the softest down pillows. The blue and silver bed-curtains draw close round the testers, keeping out draughts; and the hangings on the walls are of tapestry, all in blue and white, telling the story of Perseus and Andromeda. Then the window seats are softly cushioned with blue damask, and in each recess there is a small shelf for books. A closet at one end hath ewers of blue china and a mirror in it, and at the other, down two steps is a roomy frippery for hanging clothes.

Not all the bed-chambers in Hart Street put together would make this one, and methinks Peg and Prue would gasp with amazement at it.

The boy Hugh l'Estrange will occupy one of our

guest-chambers till he goes to be apprenticed to a famous dialler and horologist in Goldsmith's Row, for such Gabriel saith is his bent.

January 13.

I writ on so late the night before last that the midnight hour boomed from the steeples ere I laid down my quill. A day-book, methinks, is the thief of beauty sleep.

Yesterday Anne Harrison came, her brother William leaving her with me whilst he went on to the Commons' House, in which he has a seat. I brought her to see the carnation closet, and looking about, she was not slow to spy out my day-book.

'I declare,' she said, 'I, too, will keep a journal such as this. But my penmanship is vastly inferior to yours, which comes near to rivalling my father's, and that is the prettiest that ever I saw.'

'Nay; here 'tis but scribbling, not penmanship,' I answered. 'These pages are meant only for my own eyes, and maybe for Gabriel's, should he care to read what I've writ.'

'Your children and children's children will devour it,' said Anne, 'and find it of greater interest than any romance they ever read. Well, methinks I will defer beginning my journal till such time as I am wed, for then my adventures are to begin; at least,

so saith the prophetess, Lady Eleanor Davies; you know, though she be held for mad, and has suffered imprisonment, she long ago foretold truly these troubles that are now besetting the King.'

'And has Lady Eleanor foretold with whom you are to wed?' I asked.

Anne laughed and shook her sunny curls.

'So much hath not been revealed,' said she. 'He is still hid far off among the shadows of the future. When he does come forth into the light, be sure he'll prove some Apollo or fairy Prince.'

Then she jumped down from the high window-seat where she had perched herself, and said her god-mother, Lady Wolstenholn, and other company were expected to sup with them that day, and she must hurry home to prepare for their entertainment.

She threw her arms about my neck on taking leave, and, kissing me many times, vowed I was her dearest friend, doubly dear, if possible, now I was wife of her cousin Young. But she added, pouting:

'Tis a pity there are so many years betwixt you and him. He was no youth when he married first, now he must be past fifty. 'Tis a pity.'

'No, 'tis not a pity,' I said with some heat. 'I think naught of the difference in years. Gabriel is not a day too old for my liking. His age seems for me proper and fitting.'

‘Fitting! You say that because you have been ever forced to wear an old head on your young shoulders, and never been free from cares. I have admired you always for being so placid and calm through it all, but I fain would have seen my beautiful Lovejoy merry and jocund and free from care, as people of her age should be, for one sweet period of her life; but no sooner have brothers and sisters cease to hang to her skirts than she is to be plagued out of her wits by stepchildren.’

‘Play not the part of Cassandra like the Lady Eleanor Davies,’ I said.

For answer Anne’s laughter rippled forth merrily.

By this time I stood on the doorstep, and she in the open air. It had begun to snow, and the light feathery flakes fell on her little fur cap and bright hair. Certain it is there was nothing Cassandra-like about the face Anne turned back over her shoulder at me as she ran to join her waiting-woman and brother’s man at the gate-house. The blue eyes were full of sparkle, the red lips wreathed in smiles.

Sir John Harrison may well call Anne his sunbeam. She is all gaiety, brightness, and quickness, lithe and supple in her motions as a young kitten. Methinks she should have been christened by my name; ’twould suit her better than her own. ’Tis impossible

not to love joyous Anne Harrison, and to be glad to be beloved by her.

January 14.

I have no difficulty in realizing that I am a step-mother now, and methinks I never shall again forget it. They are here, my step-children, Laurel and Silence. Their arrival was preceded by a great cart-load of their baggage, and there is yet more to come. They were so attached to their home in Blois that it would seem they have tried to bring as much of their surroundings as possible with them. Their French cook and a serving-woman in peasant's cap and wooden shoes, have come with them, not to speak of two dogs, a tame squirrel, and a parrot, and divers fruit-trees and shrubs.

Already I foresee storms ahead 'twixt Alphonse and Marie and our English servants.

It was snowing heavily when the travellers arrived at Arundel stairs, and when Gabriel brought them into the hall with Hugh l'Estrange and their gentlewoman, Miriam Fisher, I could scarce discern their faces, for they were so bundled up in furs and wraps.

'Doff your hood and cloak, Laurel,' Gabriel said; 'this is your mother, whom I would have you and Silence obey and honour.'

'And who would have you both love her,' said I, holding out my arms.

But my invitation to embrace them was not accepted by either. Laurel, when she had tossed off her hood and shaken herself free of her heavy shawls and cloak, made me a pretty curtsey, and said: 'I hope you are well, madame.' She hath a rare grace and a rich brown beauty. Not only her eyes and hair are brown but her smooth skin, which deepens to a clear red in her cheeks and lips.

Silence did not move, but stood with her wide-open, deep gray eyes fixed on me, half questioningly, half mistrustfully. Silence is pale with a strange transparent pallor. Her mouth looks made for laughter, 'tis so finely curved and hath dimples at the corners, but I have not seen her smile yet except when Hugh put the tame squirrel on her shoulder.

I have had time to notice that Silence follows Hugh about like a dog, and that Laurel casts a lovingly protecting eye on both of them. Poor Hugh is low of stature for his years, and hath a somewhat misshapen body, but his head is finely formed and covered with crisp curls of the flaming hue that Venetian ladies dye their tresses, Gabriel says.

The three were refreshing themselves after their journey with hot spiced sack and sweet cakes in the library, when Hugh's eyes, wandering to the window, fell on the sundial that stands in the pleasance. With sudden alertness he unfastened the window

that gives on an outside stair of stone and ran out bareheaded, and began to brush the snow away to examine the carving and inscription on the dial. Silence would have run after him, but was held back by the gentlewoman. She struggled violently, and would have gotten loose had not Laurel interposed and made her understand with a succession of quick and eloquent signs that she was too thinly clad to plunge out in the snow.

‘Come back, Hugh,’ Laurel called from the balustrade; ‘you will catch a rheum, and Silence wants you.’

He obeyed on the instant, coming and sitting down again on the high-backed chair by the window. Silence nestled beside him, and he drew from his pouch a small pocket dial and seemed to explain to her by signs that there was some resemblance ’twixt it and the dial without on the pleasure.

‘Such toys are her delight,’ said the gentlewoman Miriam Fisher; ‘they and her sampler keep her quiet when naught else will. ’Tis a mercy her restlessness is stilled sometimes, or she’d wear us to fiddle-strings.’

‘’Tis Hugh keeps her quiet, not toys, as you call ’em,’ Laurel said. ‘She loves to be in his company. If my father sends Hugh away, stepmother, methinks Silence will fret—fret herself to death. She was nigh to breaking her heart when Hugh went from Blois

to study at Richelieu. 'Twas useless for Monsieur Pierre to write "Console-toi" on her little tablets; she would not be consoled till Hugh returned.'

'Who is Monsieur Pierre?' I asked.

Laurel raised her eyebrows as if astonished that the fame of Monsieur Pierre had not reached my ears.

'Everyone in Blois knows Monsieur Pierre,' answered she. 'The great master jeweller and clock-maker whose workshop was opposite us. Hugh and Silence have spent many hours *chez* Monsieur Pierre, watching him and his *braves garçons* ply their tools. 'Twas Monsieur Pierre who told Monsieur le Curé that Hugh ought not to waste time in learning fine gentlemanly accomplishments at the Academy Richelieu when he was clearly born to make clocks and carve dials.'

Hugh's reserve had not broken down so quickly as Laurel's, and I had scarce heard him speak till now, when he looked up and said with a smile:

"Methinks it were a happy life
To carve out dials quaintly point by point."

Gabriel heard him as he drew aside the arras that divides his study from the library and came in.

'Pleased am I, my boy, to hear you quote thus glibly great Master Will Shakespeare,' my husband said.

Hugh's colour rose, and Laurel broke forth again :

'He knows them near by heart—Master Shakespeare's history plays—and hath read them to me over and over again, as he hath done "The Faerie Queen" and Petrarch's "Sonnets."'

Laurel, 'tis plain, takes no small pride in her foster-brother.

At the proposal of bed Silence engaged in another battle-royal with her gentlewoman. With extraordinary swift and expressive actions she would show that she was not a-weary or ready for rest, though her drooping lids belied her. She clung to Hugh, appealing to him in dumb-show to side with her against Miriam. Once more 'twas Laurel who interposed and made peace. 'Tis wonderful to see how she calms Silence in her sudden gusts of passion. In a few minutes Silence went to bed like a lamb. When later I came softly on tiptoe into their bed-chamber to see if they slept, I found them yet awake, with a light still burning, and both their faces wet with tears.

Laurel, ashamed that I should see she had been crying, had turned her head away. As I bent over her she said, feigning to be cheerful :

'Bonne nuit, madame.'

'I would liefer you called me mother—not that,' said I.

‘Mother! Nay, I cannot. You are not my mother,’ she answered. ‘My mother lies far away under the palm-trees in the little churchyard on the shores of the blue Mediterranean. Father took us from Blois once on my birthday to see her grave at Nice, and the white house where she died. The rose-bushes were in bloom, though ’twas winter, and the garden fair with pansies and violets. But there’s no garden I like so well as ours at Blois. Dear Blois! I love it; but most of all at grape-picking time. Shall we ever go a grape-picking again, I wonder?’ she sighed, and continued: ‘Coming hither to England, as we passed through France, we saw many finer towns. Tours, *par exemple*, where Hugh bought the silkworms, and Orleans, where he showed us Jeanne d’Arc standing on the bridge, carved out of stone, in armour and spurs and flowing hair. Shame on us English for suffering the brave maid to be burned as a witch! And Paris, of course, is the fairest city of all; but Blois—Blois is dearest. Nowhere is the air so pure or people kinder-hearted. Ay, I love the steep little streets of Blois, and the goldsmiths’ shops; the lime-trees and vineyards, and the great forest whence the wolves come down at times into the town and carry off the children.’

‘That sounds like a fairy tale,’ said I.

‘But ’tis true. Has not father told you? When

Silence was a little girl she ran out alone one winter's day at dusk, towards the forest, and when she turned to come back a wolf was pattering behind her down the street. They called to her from the windows to come into safety, not knowing that Silence could not hear. She walked on with her eyes looking straight before her, as she often does, into space, as if she were walking in a dream, and the wolf was gaining on her every second. 'Twas Hugh who saved her. He was at Monsieur Pierre's, and he caught up Monsieur Pierre's pair of loaded pistols, and, leaping into the street, he snatched up Silence with one hand, and then with the other he shot the wolf dead. Was not that a brave deed? Hugh is not strong and big, and was but ten then, for 'tis six years ago. To think my father has not told you Hugh did this thing.'

Laurel's tears had dried on her cheek, and her voice, which, even in speaking, is full of music, trembled with excitement.

'Your father has had so much to tell me about his two daughters that he has scarce had time to speak of Hugh,' I said jestingly, as I kissed Laurel and stepped beside the other bed. Silence was lying quite still, her great eyes gazing wistfully, but unseeing, through the bed-curtains at the wall opposite, where the figure of Andromeda on her rock stood out from the tapestry in the dim light.

'Truly,' thought I, 'she hath the face of an angel.'

But when I stooped to kiss it, the angel face was whisked sharply away from me and buried in the pillows.

'She would fain have Marie to tuck her in. Silence will never sleep without. Prithee, madame, let Marie come to her,' pleaded Laurel.

They had come home and were in their father's house, yet they were homesick—homesick for Blois. Naught would content them but to have old Marie in her tall white cap, because she was to them a piece of their life at Blois, to mutter her beads beside their beds; then at last they fell asleep.

III

Candlemas, 1642.

TO-DAY, for the first time since I married, there have been guests at my husband's table—men of learning and wit, in whose choice conversation he much delighteth. Among the company were Mr. Hobbes, Mr. John Selden, Mr. Edmund Waller, and our poet neighbour, Mr. Cowley.

What with preparing for their entertainment and settling disputes 'twixt Alphonse and our English cook, I have had no time to write in this book. Then masters have had to be found to continue Silence's lessons in penmanship and drawing, and Laurel's in music and dancing. Gabriel hath entrusted to my dear father the training of Laurel's voice, which he finds of wondrous depth, and fresh and pure to admiration. She sings, methinks, like the lark on a summer morn as it wheels into the blue sky out of simple joyousness of heart; and yet there is something pathological in it withal, that can bring tears to the eyes of her listeners.

Hugh l'Estrange did not tarry long under our roof. He is gone to diet at Master Jaspar Haynes's, the dialler and mathematician, who hath his shop on the southern side of Cheap, and enjoys a great fame. Master Haynes hath some kinship with the family of Hugh's mother. 'Twas best, Gabriel said, that Hugh should lose no time in going to take up the trade (*art* Hugh doth call it) of his choice. The matter had been settled twixt Gabriel and Master Haynes before Hugh came out of France.

I have only lately learnt how 'twas Hugh came to be bred up with Laurel and Silence as their brother. His mother and theirs were playmates as children, and a very loving friendship had existed betwixt them as maidens. Hugh's mother, when she ran away to marry a handsome Papist with a foreign name, at about the same time as her friend was married to Gabriel, incurred the bitter anger of her bigoted Puritan parents, and they vowed they had cast her off and would never see her again.

There were other things besides a difference in faith to take exception to in Mr. l'Estrange. He appears to have been profligate and a gamester, and, journeying with his young wife to Italy, he soon wearied of her, and had deserted her before she was brought to bed with Hugh in the house of an apothecary in Genoa, where, by God's mercy, Gabriel and his first

lady, on their travels, chanced to find her in a most rueful plight. She, poor thing! ere she died in childbirth, did most earnestly petition the sweet friend of her girlhood to take the sickly boy and nurture him for her sake, as her own flesh and blood. This was done, and with such tenderness that when her own children were born it seemed as if she had not more love to lavish on them than she had for the little orphan of her girl friend. Gabriel writ several times to the parents of Mrs. l'Estrange, but 'twas always the same answer they gave: that, inasmuch as they had not countenanced their daughter's marriage, they did decline to countenance the fruit thereof.

So Gabriel has stood in the place of a father to Hugh, having borne the cost of his education, and now that of his apprenticeship to Master Haynes.

The day Gabriel took him thither Laurel and I bore them company; but Silence was in too great a passion of grief to come forth into the streets. So we left her behind. I have no mastery as yet of the signs by which the others communicate with her, and perforce tried to comfort her by writing on the little tablets she wears at her girdle that Hugh was not going far away, and would spend many of his Sundays and holidays with his foster-sisters. But my efforts were as vain as Monsieur Pierre's 'Console-toi,' had proved on the occasion of another

parting. Silence tore what I had writ from her tablets, crumpled it disdainfully in her little hand, and tossed it on the logs. Then she ran wildly to the door and cast herself against it as if she would fain bar it with her person against Hugh's exit. With the utmost gentleness he removed Silence out of his way, and she then lay face downwards on the floor, and her frame was shook with violent sobs. Hugh knelt down, kissed the back of her neck, that showed beneath her hair, and taking from his pouch the small portable dial, which was his proudest possession, laid it beside her on the floor.

'There now,' said Mrs. Miriam, 'methinks that is too precious a gift for one to give who is not going across seas, but only across a few streets.'

''Tis best to leave her with Marie to cry herself out,' said Laurel; and she and I followed Hugh to the hall where Gabriel awaited us.

Master Haynes hath one of those richly carved and gilded house-fronts like the goldsmiths', which are the admiration of strangers, though dwellers in London town heed them less, being so accustomed to the sight of their beauty.

The sign over his door is a dial face, painted to the shape of a tortoise, very handsomely and ingeniously.

The house hath stood there so long as the cross

itself, erected by the first King Edward in memory of his fair and sainted Queen. What pomps and processions, what tragedies and comedies, have been witnessed from the lattices of Master Haynes's house 'twould be writing a history-book to relate.

'Tis the ancientest haunts methinks that never grow familiar, because they do bring the far-off, unfamiliar past before our eyes so vividly that for the moment 'tis the present which becomes pale and shadowy. Not of the burning discontents and dissensions of the hour did my husband converse to Hugh as we took the way by Fleet Street to Ludgate and Cheapside, but of Dick Whittington, Jane Shore, and of the Saracen Princess who came over sea and land in search of her lover, Gilbert Becket, and called his name through the streets of London, that being the only word of his language she knew.

Gabriel is a great lover of the quaint itinerary of old Mr. Stow.

We were received by Master Haynes in the front of his shop, where portable dials and watches of all shapes and sizes were displayed. They were of silver, of brass, of wrought ivory and enamel. Some were made to stand, others to lie down and fold up. The workmanship of most was wondrous fine, and Hugh so ravished thereat he scarce seemed to attend to what Gabriel said as he presented him to his master.

The dialler wore a wide loose gown of russet cloth and a cap of red velvet. He has eyes magnified by big spectacles, piercing and keen as a hawk's, but the rest of his features are small and shrunken. He wears a little beard on his under lip, and his scant hair straggles as far as his round shoulders. He is a widower, and hath but one child alive, a daughter, to fall in love with whom, saith he, the pupils and apprentices regard as part of their duties.

'But they cannot all have her,' he said with a twinkle, 'and she will have none of 'em.'

He eyed Hugh's tawny curls, and then remarked that he was no strict enforcer of the sumptuary laws for 'prentices. If he were, Hugh would have to be shorn of his glory and don a fustian jerkin instead of a silken doublet.

'But for workadays we'll cover up fine clothes with that kind of garment,' said he, indicating the row of youths who sat busied with their little tools and implements in the great studio behind the shop, clad from neck to heels in calico smocks.

Beyond we caught a vista of the yard, where the elm-trees must make a pleasant shade in summer. In the open shed stood divers fair sundials on gleaming marble pedestals and pillars, ready to be transported to all parts for the adornment of noble-men's gardens.

We went upstairs to the parlour which lies over the shop and the studio, and hath three deep embrasured windows with diamond-paned lattices projecting on the street and commanding a view of the whole length of Cheap. Here Hugh is to enjoy the privilege of taking his meals at his master's board. The ceiling has a dial painted on it in red and azure with the signs of the Zodiac; these, too, are carved on the wainscot, together with many mottoes for dials, mostly scriptural. A table in the alcove was littered with maps and mathematical instruments, and over it hangs a copy of the portrait, done by the hand of Hans Holbein, of that great forerunner of Master Haynes, the German dial and clock-maker, Nicholas Kratzer, who was so greatly honoured in this country in King Hal's reign that a degree was conferred on him at Oxford.

Mistress Margaret Haynes was summoned by her father to make our acquaintance. Though she hath the advantage of Laurel in years, she looked small beside her. Her manner at first was somewhat prim and shy, but her complexion is like May blossoms: her eyes blue, and her hair, as much of it as I could see beneath her white cap, is fair, and grows in soft waves. She was dressed in gray, with that simplicity which only the extreme Puritans affect. It is scarcely seen at all among the wives and daughters of London

citizens. Yet there is no denying a plain gray kirtle and a muslin crossover, when 'tis of such dainty purity as Mistress Margaret's, is very becoming.

'These are disordered times, and 'tis difficult to keep the young men in harness,' said Master Haynes, looking from one of the windows. 'See, this is what happens now every day.'

A detachment of the train-bands were marching past to their drill-ground in Artillery Fields, and from the doorways opposite poured 'prentices by the score, calling huzzahs and waving their square caps, some tearing after the soldiers.

'If it comes to war, and the stars predict it, methinks I shall have to shut up shop and let the boys go a-soldiering; for the most diligent craftsmen become game as fighting-cocks when the air is full of trumpeting and bugle calls.'

'But Hugh won't go if 'tis to fight against the King,' exclaimed Laurel, casting on Hugh that look of nigh maternal protection which is so curious in a maid of her years.

Mistress Margaret, forgetting her shyness, accepted Laurel's words as a challenge.

'It will be the duty of all Londoners to defend their city,' said she, 'even against the King, if the King be so misguided as to make war on his subjects.'

'Twas evident Mistress Margaret Haynes had breathed in the disaffected atmosphere around her, and she was better primed for argument than Laurel, fresh from Blois, whose loyalty was newborn. Methought it had been roused to life on the spot by Mistress Margaret's Puritan garb and opposition.

The two looked at each other with some defiance. Hugh, meanwhile, had moved away, and was examining a device on paper for a dial at the end of the room.

He called Laurel to look at it.

'See, Laurel,' he said, 'this motto is from the song of Ronsard that you sing with so much sweetness.'

Laurel sang the words softly over his shoulder :

'Le temps s'en va, le temps s'en va, madame,
Hélas, le temps, non, mais nous en allons.'

'Ay, Hugh,' she added, 'you will never forget that life is brief and that death must come, living surrounded by mottoes which, whether they be in Latin, English, or French, all harp on the same theme.'

'Your daughter hath a voice, sir, that one would fain hear more of,' Master Haynes said to Gabriel.

As an invitation to Laurel to sing he opened a pair of virginals, the cover of which was most rarely carved and inlaid with miniatures of Dutch landscapes.

'I cannot attune my voice as yet to the virginals

and harpsichon, though Mr. Howard will teach me to do it in time,' said Laurel.

'But she sings to the lute. You should hear her sing to the lute, master!' Hugh exclaimed eagerly, his pride of Laurel's singing conquering his awe of the great dialler.

'Fetch thy lute,' Master Haynes said to his daughter. 'Thou givest it so little use methinks it will rust.'

''Tis only profane ditties, not songs of praise, that need to be accompanied by the lute,' Mistress Margaret said, as she went to do her father's bidding.

Laurel gave her courteous thanks when she brought the lute, and asked what she should sing.

'Anything that pleaseth you will please our ears,' Master Haynes said politely.

The clear full notes of penetrating sweetness and passion filled the room, and 'twas the Scottish Queen's chanson of farewell to the country of her gay and happy youth that Laurel sang.

'Adieu, plaisant pays de France,
O ma patrie la plus chérie,
Qui a nourri ma jeune enfance.
Adieu, France—adieu, mes beaux jours.

'La nef qui déjoint nos amours
N'a cy de moi que la moitié ;
Une partie te reste, elle est tienne ;
Je la fie à ton amitié
Pour que de l'autre elle te souviennne.'

Methought in these words of sweet sadness Laurel did take her farewell of Hugh and their old life of comradeship together at Blois. His eyes were fixed on her till the song was over, and in them there was something I had not seen there when he bent over Silence and gave her his cherished little pocket dial as she lay on the floor, breaking her heart at his going.

After we had seen Hugh's small chamber, we took our leave of Master Haynes and his daughter. On the way home a party of horsemen, wearing a green livery, clattered past us, and Gabriel said they were the men of Bucks going to Westminster to play guard to Mr. Hampden.

'And the King? Why does the King not come back to Whitehall? Shall I never see the King?' asked Laurel.

'His Majesty is out of conceit with the citizens of London,' her father made answer, 'and doth show his displeasure by keeping the light of his countenance turned from them.'

Laurel's interest in public affairs having been aroused by her recent short encounter with Mistress Margaret Haynes, she asked many questions; and Gabriel related the present unhappy relations in which the King stood to his Parliament, and how the state of things had arisen. He told the story of the

Star Chamber and Ship-money clearly and fairly withal, not laying the blame at one door more than another, for my Sir Oracle can look at a question from more than one point of view, and sees the rights and faults of both sides. That is why he takes but a passive share in these burning controversies that rage so bitterly, and is no more likely to send his plate to be put in the King's melting-pot than he is to help fill the coffers of the Parliament.

Thus Gabriel can entertain at his board men of divers and opposing opinions and hold the just balance 'twixt them, as hath been the case to-day. There was Mr. Hobbes the philosopher, with his red whiskers and keen hazel eyes, on the eve of departure for France, whither he is going to escape being clapped into the Tower for holding that the King's sovereignty, being born with him, is not to be dissociated from his person, so that 'tis lawful for him to act as he will, whether his acts be constitutional or the reverse. Next to him was sitting Mr. Selden, who thinks exactly the opposite, and is an enemy of the Bishops. Yet their conversation was amicable, even when the two gentlemen fell to talking of the Bill for excluding Bishops from Parliament. Consent to this had been wrung from the King by the tearful entreaties of the Queen, whose journey into Holland, it was threatened, should be prevented if the Bill were not passed.

Mr. Selden is tall and lanky, with a long neck and a long nose, which hath a twist at the tip. His tongue is so sharp it seems near to flay the skin of those who hear him talk, but his sayings are full of pith and wisdom. Infinitely more pleasing is Mr. Edmund Waller's manner of converse. 'Tis fluent and vivacious and full of charm. Mr. Waller first sat in Parliament when he was eighteen, and spent his early youth at King James's Court. He has married two wives, and he wooed in vain the fair lady Dorothea Sidney, whom, under the name of Sacharissa, he hath eternalized in his smooth and polished verse. He is nearly related to Mr. Hampden, and passes as an adherent of the Parliament, though methinks, from words he let fall this evening, he bears no ill will towards His Majesty, and only lately he hath made a great speech pleading that Episcopacy should be reformed, not abolished. Mr. Waller delighted the company by recounting a merry story of King James.

'Talking of Bishops,' said he, 'I once overheard his late Majesty, when the Bishops of Winchester and Durham were standing behind his chair, ask: "My lords, cannot I take my subjects' money when I want it without all this formality of Parliament?"'

'Dr. Neale, the Bishop of Durham, readily answered:

“Sir, why should you not? You are the very breath of our nostrils.”

‘Whereupon the King turned and said to the Bishop of Winchester :

“ Well, my lord, what say you ?”

“ Sir,” replied the Bishop, “ I have no skill to judge of Parliamentary cases.”

‘ The King answered :

“ No put-offs, my lord ; I’ll have an answer.”

“ Then, sir,” said the Bishop of Winchester, “ I think it is lawful for you to take my brother Neale’s money, for he offers it.”’

‘ Now, who would have thought a Bishop capable of so brilliant a thrust ?’ remarked Mr. Selden.

Sitting here in the quiet privacy of the carnation closet, I would fain set down some of Mr. Selden’s thrusts, Mr. Hobbes’ parries, and Mr. Waller’s flashes of wit ; but, perchance because I am drowsy, I can recall only the impression, not the words. I have said nought of Mr. Abraham Cowley, who was of the company. He did not shine in it, for though he writes finer poetry than Mr. Waller, he is a poor talker and stumbles in his speech.

Gabriel has put his head in at the door to say he would never have given me a day-book if he had guessed it would keep me up so late. Without in

the Lane, among the cries of Candlemas roysterers, I hear the voice of the bellman calling, 'A fine star-light night,' and as I am nodding over this page and the quill slipping from my fingers, methinks I had better stop.

March.

I wonder if I shall ever find the key to Silence's heart? Her dumbness doth surround her with such seemingly impenetrable barriers of mystery and reserve. Laurel addresses me now, not as step-mother or madame, but calls me mother. 'Tis only in her stout defence of Silence that she sometimes opposes my authority. She is an affectionate, winsome maid, somewhat of a chatterbox, though I have noticed she often puts a check on her tongue in Silence's presence. Laurel's lips are moulded with so clean a beauty that Silence can read them as she can Hugh's, and it irritates her when they move too fast.

Laurel will cease playing on any instrument of music directly Silence comes into the room. She has begged that when my father comes to instruct her Silence may be kept at her sampler upstairs.

'She can tolerate to see me sing or dance,' said Laurel, 'but for music she hath an abhorrence. 'Tis strange, as she cannot hear it. At Blois, when the fiddlers and pipers played at the grape-picking feasts,

she would not tarry in the vineyard. And Hugh never dared play on his violin before her except once. Then she could so ill bear it that, with her teeth set and eyes aflame, she leapt on Hugh and tried to wrench the violin out of his hands. He held it high above him out of her reach, but she caught the bow, and her anger gave her strength to break it in two. Methinks she was jealous—jealous that Hugh should rest his chin so lovingly on what to her was naught but a piece of wood, and look so blissful at dragging sweet sounds from it. Yes,' added Laurel, 'I can understand how she feels, my poor Silence! Is she not fair, mother, and is not her broidering a marvel?'

In truth it is, and Silence works miracles with her needle. Her restless limbs are still, her fair face intent, when she sits at her frame with the gay-coloured crewels and gold and silver threads around her. Her samplers are pictures into which are wrought stories and fancies and beasts and birds out of Silence's head. There are no stitches in needlework that I can teach her, for she knows them all. But in the stillroom she has much to learn, this branch of my stepdaughters' education having, methinks, been neglected at Blois. They are both ignorant of herbs, and have never been taught to make caudles and syrups or to conserve and candy.

Their gentlewoman, Miriam Fisher, saith that Alphonse is to blame for this. Alphonse was wont to rule the ménage like a despot, and would not brook any encroachment on his own sacred domain. Now he would hold a like sway here, and doth refuse to impart any of his culinary secrets to the English cook, who, on her side, affects to disdain them. Alphonse says there cannot be two chefs in an establishment, and has inquired whether he is to be the *chef vrai* or the *chef nominal*; if but the *chef nominal*, well, then 'twere easy to go to be chef in the palace of a milord on the Thames, only the young demoiselles can eat no potage but that prepared by his hands, the hands of Alphonse. So what shall be done?

'We must not suffer Alphonse to cause trouble in the household,' said my husband when I repeated this. 'Tis simple enough to send him back to Blois.'

'No, no, father, do not send Alphonse back,' implored Laurel. 'Only conceive how Silence would miss Alphonse's *gâteaux de fête*!'

'That is talking like a foolish child, Laurel. 'Tis for your mother to decide whether Alphonse goes or stays.'

'If you send Alphonse away,' said Laurel, turning to me, 'Silence will hate you.'

This was the time, thought I, to show 'twas not by humouring all Silence's whimsies that I desired to win her affection, so I said :

'Nevertheless, Alphonse will go if he persists in not living in charity and goodwill with our English servants.'

'Silence will hate you,' Laurel repeated in a low tone that did not reach her father's ears, but only mine, as she left the room.

Afterwards, when Laurel and Silence were come back from taking the air with their gentlewoman in the fields of Lincoln's Inn, I saw from my windows Laurel cross the courtyard to the servants' lodgings, and hold a conference with Alphonse. She urged him, I did not doubt, to be less overbearing and quarrelsome in future. Many shrugs, gesticulations, and at last bows and smiles, seemed to satisfy her that she had gained her point.

And the *gâteau de fête* which Alphonse did design to honour Hugh, when he came hither last Sunday for the first time since we left him at the dialler's, was so wondrously ingenious that Alphonse was said to have surpassed himself, and in this performance to have called forth ungrudging applause from his rival in the kitchen. 'Twas in the shape of a tortoise, to imitate the sign over Master Haynes's door, and the shell was made of frosted rose-leaves and violet

petals, and *bien-venu* was writ in letters of gilded hazel-nuts round the creature's neck.

Hugh sat again in the library with his foster-sisters as on the evening of their arrival, the spaniels playing at their feet, the parrot perching first on one and then on another, and Bo-bo the squirrel scurrying round on the top of the bookshelves.

Yet the picture was not the same, for Hugh's flaming curls, that then had set aglow the sombre background of dark oak wainscot and ancient vellum bindings, were gone. He had chosen to get his head cropped like the majority of Master Haynes's apprentices, and no longer wears the short rapier with jewelled hilt at his girdle.

Silence's joy at his coming gave place for a moment to sharp distress as she marked the change, and Laurel said :

'Tis the prim Puritan miss, belike, who made you cut your hair ?'

'Nay,' Hugh answered ; 'tis the fashion for 'prentices.'

'And 'tis the fashion for 'prentices to fall in love with Mistress Prunes and Prisms. Are you following that fashion too ?'

'Mistress Margaret Haynes is good and fair. We will not speak of her by nicknames.'

'Maybe 'tis profane to speak of her at all, as 'tis

profane to sing ditties to the lute. Was she not mightily shocked at what I sang ?'

Hugh gave no answer, and Laurel laughed merrily over her own jest at the expense of Mistress Margaret. There is a look of sadness sometimes in Hugh's red-brown eyes. He knows his mother's grievous story, and doth cherish in his heart a deep resentment against the father he has never seen, but who still lives under another name, Gabriel believes. Indeed, 'tis likely enough the name he bestowed on his poor little bride was not his own, for 'tis affirmed by her relatives that he has from time to time assumed disguises and played divers parts. Another cause of Hugh's occasional melancholy is his consciousness of the defects of his person. But who thinks of the little crookedness in his back, and that one shoulder is not even with the other, when looking at his face ? In Hugh's face is a power which atones for any weakness of figure. A world of strength lies alone in the firm chin and clear-cut lips, and a strange light shines out through his eyes when he is moved to an outburst of talking, he being as a rule a lad of few words.

If he would not speak of Mistress Margaret he had much to say of his wonderful master, and related with pride that he had been admitted to his sanctum at the top of the house, a privilege scarcely ever

granted to the younger apprentices. Here Master Haynes casts horoscopes, and he has shown Hugh a comet through the giant telescope from a platform on the leads. This comet portends, Master Haynes said, a bloody and desolating war, which will tear the kingdom in twain, and will in the end be the undoing of His Majesty.

The King hath now resolved to make his capital in York, and from thence refuses all the Parliament's petitions to come to them again, saying that he would be but the shadow of a King if he yielded the command of the militia to the Parliament.

So preparations for war go on apace, and the City is becoming a camp. The King may well call London 'the nursery of the rebellion,' though Sir Oracle saith there are many wealthy citizens and Aldermen, such as Sir Paul Pindar and Sir Nicholas Crisp, who will gladly beggar themselves in sending secret supplies to the King. Most of those who are friendly to the King in the Parliament have gone to York; those who remain run the risk every day of arrest and imprisonment. Sir Richard Gurney, our good and gallant Lord Mayor, has been deprived of his office and sent to the Tower, being suspected of sympathizing with the Court, and in his stead they have elected one, Mr. Pennington, a Puritan, out and out for the Parliament.

The order for a great sundial for the King's garden in Whitehall, Hugh told us, was being held in abeyance by his master, although a most elaborate and magnificent design had been drawn out for it. 'Twas thought possible that in the present disturbed and uncertain state of affairs the work might, belike, neither be erected nor paid for, so 'twas deemed safer not to embark on the task of executing it.

'The King has had ever a great fancy for dials,' said Hugh. 'Once when he visited the City he came privately to Master Haynes, the 'prentices say, and made choice of a small gold pocket dial to wear on his person.'

'Oh, lucky Mistress Margaret!' exclaimed Laurel. 'The King came into her father's shop, you say? She will have seen him face to face, and maybe conversed with him? Ay, I envy your Mistress Margaret, Hugh. Not that she will hold herself enviable, I warrant, with her talk of defending the City against the King—against the King, forsooth!'

'Kings are all very well,' Hugh answered; 'but rights and liberties are precious things, and even kings must be taught not to tamper therewith.'

Thus quickly has Hugh picked up the political jargon of the day, and caught the views that prevail mostly now among his fellow-'prentices and the citizens of London.

Laurel, on the other hand, grows daily a more zealous King's woman, with little, 'tis true, to feed her zeal in a London which King and Court have deserted.

Her father sets her the example of moderation, at which, methinks, she is not a little provoked, and beneath his roof men who are on both sides, or on neither, meet on neutral ground.

IV

June 25, 1642.

GABRIEL has a property consisting of cherry-gardens and a small farm near Hampstead Mills, and we took coach thither to-day for a midsummer frolic.

First we went to Hart Street to add Peg and Prue and little Jane and Jack to our party. On our way through the City we beheld a remarkable spectacle. Surging towards the Guildhall was a great throng of womenfolk, of all ranks and all ages. Dames and daughters of wealthy merchants, bejewelled and beribboned, cheek by jowl with Holborn water-carriers and hucksters' wives. The rich were followed by servants bearing gold and silver plate, handsome goblets and flagons, and most of the humbler women, down to the poorest, held some small treasured possession in their aprons. One or two, as they joined in the procession, took the silver bodkins from their hair, and the wedding-rings from their fingers, and declared that 'twas all they had, but they would

give it readily. This was part of the response in the City to the Parliament's order that 'troops and money should be raised there to meet the King's active preparations for war'—this train of women, wending their way with trinkets and toys, through the bright sunlit streets beneath the deep blue of the June sky.

Here and there I recognised a face I had known from childhood: a citizen's wife, whose sons and daughters my father had taught the viol and lute; the wife of the sexton of St. Olave's; the mother of one of the numerous cook-boys, who had succeeded each other so rapidly in our home in Hart Street. But I must confess 'twas no little surprise to see in this patriotic crowd Mistress Travers, the widow of Seething Lane, my brother Roger's godmother.

She minced along in her best furbelows and flounces, holding a mighty fine jewel-box before her, and was followed by a rosy-cheeked serving-maid.

'We have had naught of madam's company lately, thank goodness,' said Peg when I told her. 'Me-thinks at last she hath abandoned her quest as vain, and sees that none of her blandishments and wiles will ever win us.'

'She has not been near the house,' Prue explained, 'since the night she took upon herself to put Jack to

bed, hoping to get into Penelope's good books by saving her the trouble.'

'And I wouldn't let her hear me say my prayers,' Jack broke in; 'and when she asked why I wouldn't, I said 'twas because I was going to pray that she shouldn't invite herself to sup with us any more, and make Peg cross.'

'Well done, Jack!' laughed Prue. "'Sweetest cherub" betrayed the citadel, 'tis true, but we must give him the credit of having cleared it withal.'

'I would fain not hear of Jack's discourtesies to any lady in his father's house,' said I, a reproof which made Jack crimson, and say:

'Peg didn't scold me for't.'

Now 'twas Peg's turn to blush, but the irrepressible Prue went on:

'That jewel-box, Lovejoy, which you saw madam carrying just now to the Guildhall, with all the sacrificial airs of a Roman matron, I'll warrant—don't I know that jewel-box?—'tis lined with quilted blue satin and scented with musk. She hath opened it before me, to dazzle my eyes with its contents, and tried to tempt me to accept a gift therefrom. I might have had a cross set with emeralds, a chain of fine gold, or a pearl ring with a posy. "Now, you pretty puss, choose which you like," said she. Belike if she had not called me puss

I might have yielded; but that gave me a nausea. 'Tis she who purrs, methinks. I thanked her, and said my father would not permit us to accept presents. "Not from strangers or gallants, I perfectly understand," said she; "but from me, so old and tried a friend." And she put her head on one side, simpering, and stroked my cheek, and then I was as firm as adamant.'

'And if you had not been, the Parliament would now be the poorer by one emerald cross, perchance,' said Peg.

Amidst this chatter Laurel sat silent beside me, for she still bears herself with some reserve towards my sisters. Gabriel rid behind the coach, and Silence and Mistress Miriam were each on a pillion. Jack sat betwixt Peg and Prue in the coach, and Jane was without on the box, to her infinite enjoyment. We passed fair gardens that the merchants rent at some distance from the City, away from their houses. So far as their fruit-gardens I have often come on summer evenings, ever since I can remember—my father's friends among the Aldermen inviting us to feast on their strawberries, and to disport ourselves in their shady walks under the fruit-trees. I have seen many times the citizens' pretty daughters, attired like mock shepherdesses, coquetting here with their fathers' 'prentices, or with their rivals and sworn foes,

the gentlemen of the Inns of Court, who do not disdain to woo the merchants' money-bags. To-day not the flutter of a petticoat was to be seen among the strawberry-beds, the fair ones being too busily engaged, I suppose, in swimming with the popular tide in the City to come forth and play at rural pastimes.

Further than the gardens I had scarce ever been ; but now we left them far behind us, and climbed a steep ascent 'twixt hayfields and honeysuckle hedges. Then our road was flanked with stately elms, and at every turn of it we looked down on green glades and pastures gilded with buttercups, and here and there a silver mirror of water, shining out from its framework of sedge and rushes and forget-me-nots. The prospect widened and widened as we reached the crest of the hill, and we alighted by the windmills on a wild, open heath. To the west one seems, as it were, to look over the heads of vast woods, that stretch away in waves to blue hills that rise ridge upon ridge till they melt in the sky. 'Twas so clear to-day that we could see the Castle of Windsor embowered in its forest ; whilst on the other side, to the east, London, with its steeples and towers and bastions, lay unfolded at our feet, like a parti-coloured map.

As we stood gazing on the goodly view, a breeze, such as I have never felt the like for sweetness and

freshness on a hot summer day, did sport with our kirtles and ribands and ruffle our tresses. It sent Jack's cap from his head, dancing along the uneven ground, and he and Jane pursued it, fluttering among the broom-bushes like a pair of butterflies.

'Methinks this is the hill, sister Lovejoy,' said Jack, as he came back out of breath from the chase of his cap, 'where Sir Richard Whittington sat looking down on London with his cat, and heard the bells.'

'Let us play at a game of oranges and lemons,' cried Jane at the mention of bells.

'Nay; methought cherry-bob was to be the favoured game to-day,' said Gabriel.

'But where are the cherries?' the children asked.

'Come with me and I will show you,' Gabriel said.

We followed him down a rough path into a dell on the heathside, and here were the cherry orchards, backing the low-gabled wooden farmhouse, with a paved yard full of cocks and hens and geese.

The farmer's wife came out, curtsying and smiling, to greet us, and ushered us into her cool, low parlour, with flagged floor and green lattices, where she set before us new-pressed curds, cream fresh from the bowl, butter fragrant from the churn, brown bread and honey, and a pitcher of wine made of her own meadow cowslips. After enjoying this

dainty cheer we went out into the orchards, and a veritable canopy of red, black and white-heart cherries hung above us. The farm servants brought ladders, and we fell to plucking the cherries, and the children did feast on them. Silence, methought, looked happier and more content than she was generally wont to do out of Hugh's company. Laurel said 'twas because the great woods that girdled Hampstead reminded her of the forest at Blois. Silence had been grave when we had took boat one day to see the lions and white bears at the Tower, and she had not smiled when some mummers came and played their antics before our windows in Chancery Lane at Whitsuntide; but now she was actually laughing as she swung herself on the branch of a cherry-tree and tossed down bunches of the fruit into a hamper, in which little Jack sat and tried to catch the cherries in his mouth as they fell. This rare laughter of Silence's has a curious gurgling sound that is nigh uncanny, but it doth add to the beauty of her fair face, inasmuch as it sets all its wondrous soft curves and dimples in play and lights up her great melancholy eyes.

The task of mounting guard over her sister that Laurel doth so lovingly impose upon herself, even though her gentlewoman be present, may make me less watchful of her perhaps than I should be other-

wise. Anyhow, to-day I had not noticed her slip down from the tree and wander away by herself, when Gabriel took me to see his dappled cows in a neighbouring meadow.

‘Hearken! what is that?’ I exclaimed; for, coming from some distance, a terrifying sound pierced the summer air and silenced the merry young voices in the orchard. ’Twas a sound rarer and even more uncanny than Silence’s laugh, Silence’s cry.

I saw Laurel spring up directly she heard it, and, fleet-footed as any hare, run up the slope towards the rough roadway across the heath whence we had descended to the farm. Gabriel and Mistress Miriam and I followed in the same direction; but by the time we had gained the road Laurel had vanished, and we hesitated whether to turn to the right or the left.

‘If ’tis the horse-racing you want to see,’ said one of a group of clowns on the road, ‘yonder is the path.’

We moved to the spot that he indicated with a jerk of his head, and on a level sward, at the foot of a declivity, we looked down on a scene of mid-summer madness.

A concourse of fine ladies and gentlemen, some mounted on spirited horses, others on foot, attired *à la campagne*, besides a swarm of rustics of both

sexes, were gathered together to watch horses tearing round an open space. From the outskirts of this medley of fantastically habited humankind Laurel emerged, Silence clinging to her arm, appearing greatly affrighted. With them came a gallant protector, whom I recognised at once as that very pink of virtuous chivalry and manly beauty, Richard Lovelace, the Cavalier poet. My husband had once pointed him out to me in Hyde Park as he walked there with other poets and wits, such as Andrew Marvel and Sir John Suckling to boot. Since then he had been imprisoned in the Gate-house at Westminster, where he writ the lines,

‘ Stone bars do not a prison make,
Nor iron walls a cage,’

and had been only let loose on a promise to the Parliament that he would fight the rebels in Ireland. Whether he had failed to keep this promise, or was but taking the sight of a race on the way to its performance, I know not.

‘ Father,’ said Laurel quickly, as they came up to us—‘ father, thank this gentleman for rescuing Silence from insult. If he had not interfered think what would have happened: those churlish wretches there would have dared—ay, dared to kiss her!’

Disgust and indignation blazed from Laurel’s brown eyes. Then, as she turned them on the

beautiful and gallant person at her side, they softened, and she repeated :

‘ Thank this gentleman, father. Go down on your knees and thank him.’

‘ No, no, sir,’ said Captain Lovelace. ‘ Indeed, I have received more sweet thanks than I am deserving of already. Is it not sufficient reward in itself to be given the chance of rendering a service to fair maidens in distress? I am heartily ashamed to think that those who molested your daughter, sir, were not clownish ruffians, but so-called gentlemen of quality. Their only poor excuse is that they have quaffed too deeply of the “ Spaniards’ ” nut-brown ale.’

‘ At least, if I may not thank you,’ answered Gabriel, ‘ let me hope that I may have the honour of receiving you some day at my house in Chancery Lane, the Gray House over against the gateway of Lincoln’s Inn.’

‘ Then you are Mr. Young, the collector of rare books!’ exclaimed the poet. ‘ Verily it will be a pleasure to share your hospitality with many illustrious friends of mine who I know have been privileged to enjoy it often. And now that I have consigned my pretty charges to their proper guardians, with your permission I will take my leave.’

With his hat in his hand, and the late afternoon

sunlight shining on his fair hair, he bowed and smiled to each of us in turn. And what a smile and what a bow were his—unrivalled in courtly charm and grace! No wonder Peg and Prue, who now had come with Mistress Miriam from the orchard to learn what was the matter, were fairly dazzled by one of whom it hath been said all women admire and adore him, but who remains, nevertheless, modest and unspoilt, and ever constant to a hopeless passion.

As he withdrew, a little posy of field-flowers, tied by a ribbon, fell unnoticed by him from the jewelled clasp of his satin doublet; it was a badge of the rustic pastime in which he was taking a part. It dropped close to Laurel's feet, and she picked it up and placed it within the folds of her lace kerchief.

Driving home, I gathered from Laurel more exactly what had happened to Silence. It seemed she had started, unseen by the others, with the idea of exploring the woods on her own account, and must have been alarmed when she had found herself coming on a crowd. 'Twas not unnatural that she should have attracted the observation of some of the gay, half-tipsy gallants hanging about the scene of the chariot-race—so fair a maid as Silence, walking alone, her eyes shining like great

stars out of a face near as white as her dimity kirtle, her thick hair waving round her head like a halo. One man took his oath that here was a wingless angel descended from heaven; a second said he would not lay a wager on it till he had heard her speak, and came forward and addressed her with impudent assurance.

Silence making no reply, convinced the first that he was right. She was truly an angel and did not understand the language of earth, said he.

‘Let us see if she doth understand the language of kisses,’ said a third, and would have boldly suited the action to the word, when Silence gave that long-drawn, ear-piercing scream, and Richard Lovelace had bounded forward, with his hand on the hilt of his sword, and cowed Silence’s persecutors.

‘They had skulked off by the time I got to her,’ said Laurel.

‘And, for aught we know, a duel may come of it yet,’ said Prue.

‘Don’t talk of such dreadful things!’ cried Peg. ‘A duel! It makes me sick to think of it. His loveliness run through by a sword-thrust!’ Then foolish Peg leant forward, and said to Laurel in a pleading tone: ‘Could you spare just one flower out of that dear nosegay for me?’

Laurel straightened herself proudly, and, unfasten-

ing the flowers from her bosom, tossed them into Peg's lap.

'I can well spare all,' she said, with her lip a-curl.

It hurt her to know that her action in picking up and cherishing the faded flowers had been observed.

Now, Peg and Prue are different. They were not ashamed to divide the posy betwixt them, and to wrangle openly as to who should have the riband.

'You have that big poppy, so 'tis but fair I should have the riband.'

'Tut! I am the elder, so it falls to me by right.'

My severe and disapproving looks failed to quiet them as of old; and I was glad that Laurel appeared to be indifferent to their converse, and kept her eyes fixed on the landscape without.

'Twas as if we were descending into some enchanted vale, and great London were a city of dreams. The dun-coloured bricks of the Tower, the white pinnacles of Paul's, and the gray stones of Westminster, were now alike of molten gold in the rays of the setting sun. Beyond the winding river, and the theatres and bear-pits of Southwark, was a misty violet line of hills, like those we were leaving behind us.

And at this minute, whilst I write, from all the

heights are leaping tongues of flame from the midsummer fires. I have drawn back the curtains of the oriel in my carnation closet, and can see their glare reddening the cloudless, starless sky above Highgate and Hampstead Mills.

July 4.

Sir Oracle came home from his bookseller's in Paul's Churchyard this forenoon with a new folio that he deems priceless, and the news that the Commons have appointed my Lord Essex General of their army. Mr. Hampden and Mr. Holles have been made colonels in foot regiments, and one Cromwell a colonel of their horse. London is agog with excitement, and the people are decorated with streamers of orange, Lord Essex's colour.

The shopkeepers, instead of crying 'What d'ye lack?' at their doors, are polishing muskets and pikes, and have, for the most part, shut up their shops. The only business that hath any interest for them now is the business of war!

Hugh says that Master Haynes has promised to take back, when their services are no longer required, those of his prentices who have enrolled under Major-General Skippon.

'Yet he would be loth to part with all, methinks,' said Hugh, 'for he offers to give a prize to any

apprentice who is able in his private hours to design and carry out some original and fantastic device for a dial.'

'And is the prize to be his daughter, Mistress Margaret?' asked Laurel, in that roguish manner she doth now adopt towards her foster-brother.

'He did not say 'twould be a human prize,' Hugh replied, without smiling.

He crossed the room to the window where Silence sat broidering on her sampler, wrapt in her silent world of pictures.

She is at times oblivious of even Hugh's beloved presence, so engrossed does she become in her work, and she had only laid down her needle for a moment to greet him when he came in unexpectedly just now.

The youth, methinks, is much torn 'twixt his devotion to his craft and the contagion for soldiering that hath spread among his *confrères* and throughout London. For, despite his crooked shoulders, he is not lacking in a boy's fine courage and spirit, as hath been long ago proven.

Then Laurel related to him the story of Silence's adventure at Hampstead Mills. He clenched his fists, and there was a fierce glow in his red-brown eyes.

'Would I had been there to defend her,' said he,

‘and to serve those rascally villains as I served the wolf at Blois!’

‘Ah! but she had a defender,’ Laurel said—‘a true Red Cross Knight methinks, and most gallant; so tall, and fair, and perfect in face and form—and in soul too, I’ll warrant.’

Hugh winced as if he had been struck, and Laurel, quick to see the effect of her careless words, was on the instant full of repentance. She ran to him, and, laying her hand caressingly in his, added eagerly:

‘But not so brave as one I wot of—not near so brave; for that were impossible, Red Cross Knight or no. Come, Hugh! Come and read to me beneath the trees, as you were wont to do at Blois. See, here is “Aucassin and Nicolette.” She drew a tiny duodecimo of Elzevir print, tied with lilac strings, from her apron pocket. ‘If we go and sit on that bench near the window, where Silence can see us should she look up, she will not mind.’

So the two went out into the sunshine, and seated themselves on the bench, and both pairs of brown eyes were bent on the same small page. The July zephyrs gently stirred the branches above their heads, and set the leaves a-rustling, and their shadows danced and quivered on the paved path at

their feet, where the drowsy spaniels lay rolled up like balls of silk.

'Twas a blissful hour for Hugh, I doubt not, Laurel, by her sweetness, having soon healed, apparently, the wound she had inflicted. After he had read some time, 'twas Laurel's turn to sing, and her clear, rich-toned voice awoke the echoes of Chancery Lane, as she did trill forth that wailing, piteous ballad of the North that she is always singing, so that, methinks, I know it by heart, and can write it here from memory:

' My love he built me a bonny bower,
And clad it all with lily flower ;
A braver bower ye ne'er did see
Than my true love he built for me.

' They slew my knight to me sae dear—
They slew my knight and pained me gear ;
My servants all for life did flee,
And left me in extremitie.

' I sewed his sheet, making my mane,
I watched the corpse myself alane ;
I watched his body night and day,
No living creature came that way.

' I took his body on my back,
And while I went, and while I sat,
I digged a grave and laid him in,
And happed him with the sod sae green.

' But think na ye my heart was sair
When I laid the mould upon his hair ;
Oh, think na ye my heart was wae
When I turned about away to gae.'

The last notes of Laurel's song were still trembling on the air when, looking forth from my coign of vantage, the window of the library, I observed the handsome face of a red-haired man of middle age, pale and worn, and, methought, full of traces of ill living, raised above the wall of the neighbouring garden to ours. The man had been attracted, I suppose, to survey thus rudely other people's domains by Laurel's voice. He disappeared on the opening of the postern in the covered wall opposite, through which Gabriel came from the street in company of two gentlemen, and I have thought no more of that face looking over the wall till now.

One of the gentlemen with Gabriel was no other than Captain Lovelace. As they drew near the bench, Laurel sprang up, and Hugh must needs do likewise. Poor boy! Never, thought I, would he have felt more keenly alive to his own undersized and uneven growth than at the moment when cruel chance threw him into such close proximity with that 'perfect form' of which Laurel had spoken so admiringly.

The incarnation of elegance and strength and unaffected grace was Captain Lovelace as he stood there and doffed his hat, with its roseate plumes, the blue of his silver-laced coat reflected in his frank and smiling eyes.

The music of his speech came to my ears through the open lattice, but at that distance I could not distinguish his words. I held my breath to see how Hugh would carry himself. He hung his head (which he need not have done, methought, for it hath a rare dignity and character of its own, even though it be shorn of its ruddy glory), and, murmuring some civility, he turned to examine a shrub in the border.

'Twas one of the rosemary bushes my stepchildren had transplanted from Blois. In the air of Chancery Lane it refuses to thrive, and there, amid the sturdy lilac bushes and tall sunflowers, it doth languish stunted and leafless.

Silence, aweary of her cramped position at last, stood up, stretched herself, scattering her silks and crewels about the floor for Miriam Fisher to pick up and put away, and rushed like a whirlwind to the garden.

The splendid figure in blue and silver was not the magnet which drew her thither, for, without seeming to recognise her recent benefactor, she passed him by, and went, straight as an arrow from a bow, to Hugh's side. Her great eyes for a moment searchingly swept his face, then, as if discerning some need of comfort there, she threw her arm about Hugh's neck, and bent her head, with his, over the dying shrub.

V

August 31, 1642.

WE dwellers in London town, which the Parliament doth boast is the 'very heart and soul of their cause,' have been so accustomed to warlike preparations, the sound of martial music, and the sight of men at drill in every open space around the city, that the King's declaration of war comes scarce as a shock, but rather as something long expected.

His Majesty planted the Royal Standard on a hill near Nottingham more than a week ago, and Lord Essex is preparing to set out with his troops for Northampton. The news of a battle being fought may now come any day.

'And father sits quietly there with his musty tomes and papers, as if the battles fought by Greeks and Trojans thousands of years ago were of more import to him,' Laurel said this morning. 'If I were a man, even an old man, methinks I would be up and doing for the King.'

'Not if it were against your conscience,' I said.

'Conscience! If conscience, forsooth, means seeing the righteousness of both sides, I have none. Both sides cannot be right, say I.'

Laurel is but a child to hold such strong convictions. I scarce know how she has gotten them, unless it be through drawing her own conclusions from the arguments she has listened to at her father's table.

Gabriel takes so great a pride in Laurel's singing and dancing that to hear her sing a roundel, or to watch her dance a slow and stately pavan or a lively galliard, is often a part of the entertainment which he provides for his guests.

If she were inclined to vanity, methinks 'twould not be wise to bring her forward thus; but Laurel is not vain, and has no eyes as yet for her own young charms. She is proud of Silence's curious moonlight beauty, and declares that none of the fine ladies she hath seen at the playhouse, or at the private masque to which we were bidden a short time since in Spring Garden, are worthy to hold a candle to Silence for fairness. But then she has not seen the Court belles, most of whom are now with the Queen at Oxford. Lady Carlisle tarries yet in London, intriguing, 'tis said, in the Parliament's cause. Once so famed for her friendship with the

great Lord Strafford, she long ago transferred it to Mr. Pym. She hath lost much of her beauteous looks of late, Mr. Waller says, and he no longer feels inspired to write odes to her.

When they came from Blois, Silence's and Laurel's wardrobe was but scantily furnished, and Gabriel said he wished it replenished with all the bravery befitting their position. Neither seemed to be the least sick for new clothes, as Peg and Prue often are, and 'twas difficult to get Laurel to take any interest in the choice of brocades and velvets and the matching of riband knots and laces. She scarce glanced at herself in the mirror when arrayed for Spring Garden in her new purple paduasoy suit, with deep Flemish point collar and a waistcoat of aurora satin wrought with acorns in gold thread, in which she looks very fine and pretty. A string of rare pearls that Gabriel gave her she will not wear, vowing she is too brown for pearls.

'I am for all the world as brown as the gipsies,' said she one day in the still-room, when I was teaching her to distil rose-leaves for rose-water. 'Have you no recipe, mother, for an unguent or wash that will make me pink and white like Mistress Margaret Haynes?'

Her brownness is a distress to her when she gives any thought to her appearance at all, but methinks

'twill not be long ere Laurel learns that a nut-brown maid may be every whit as much admired as a pink and white one.

Already Gabriel has had letters from acquaintances among the country gentry craving leave to bring their sons to call, with a view to treating for Laurel's hand. For it hath got wind that Gabriel's daughters are something of heiresses, and marrying and giving in marriage goes on merrily even in these disturbed and uncertain times. Sir Oracle says he would liefer that Silence remain ever unwed, but that he will marry Laurel at a fitting age to a fitting suitor. Laurel, belike, will have some say in the matter, and a mind of her own as to who be a fitting suitor, for 'tis certain she is unlike other maidens.

September 2.

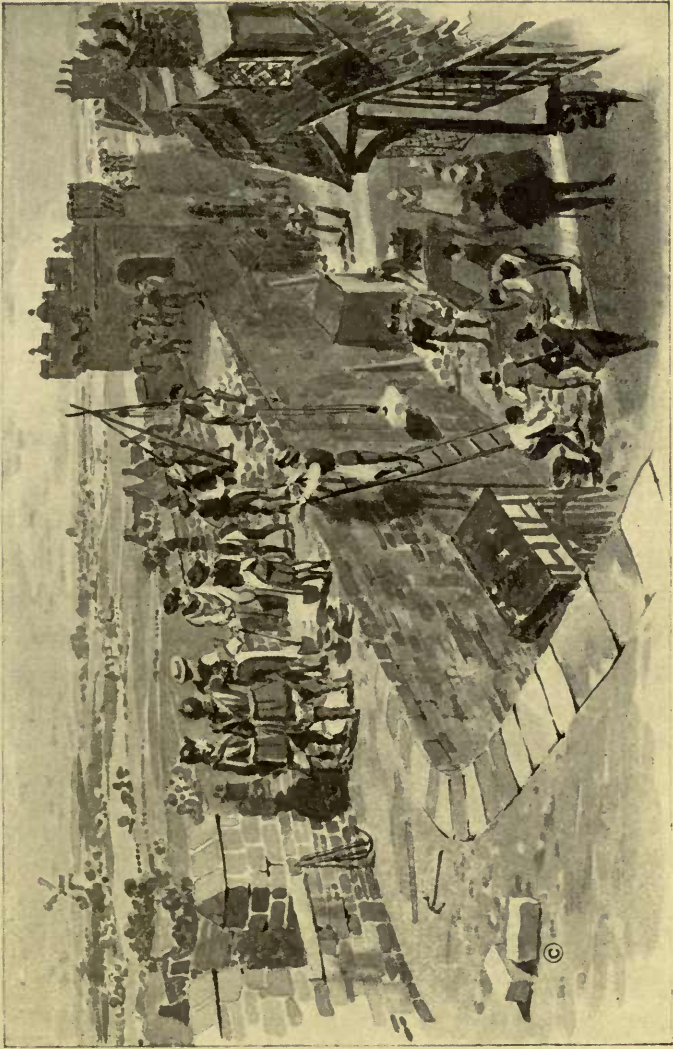
Yesterday morning we went to welcome to town my husband's kinsman, Sir John Harrison, on his return from Balls, in Hertfordshire, with his daughters Anne and Margaret to their winter quarters in Bishopsgate. We found that they had gone forth to visit my Lady Wolstenholme in Crutched Friars, so Gabriel left me to go home with the servant whilst he called on Sir Paul Pindar in that wondrous carven house whose gables jut far over the street close by the Harrisons' present lodgings.

A great commotion reigned in the streets, for, besides the ballad-mongers bawling their ballads as usual and the fruit-sellers their wares, and bearwards, jugglers, and mountebanks adding to the din, there came from the summit of the city walls the sound of mallets and chisels. An army of masons are at work there daily in obedience to the orders of Puritan Lord Mayor Pennington, who has decreed that the ancient gray bastions shall be made stronger. Mighty and impregnable those bastions seemed to me when, as a child, I went to gather groundsel for my canaries, and little ferns and stone-crop from their niches by Cripplegate. I felt proud to live within so safe a girdle; and strong enough had they been, in truth, to guard London against her enemies in the time of Norman, Plantagenet, and Tudor monarchs. But now that London doth hold the King, Charles Stuart to be her enemy, the poor city wall, despite its stout service in the past, must be strengthened withal to check His Majesty's advance on his own capital.

Passing by palatial Crosby Hall, the background of Master Shakespeare's history of 'Richard III.,' I must needs fall to thinking of other times than these, despite the bustle around: of Sir Thomas More, one of the favourites of our history-book, who lived under the grand roof of Crosby Hall for three years, when

he sold it to 'his entire dear friend' Antonio Bonvici, a merchant of Lucca, to whom he writ from the Tower a letter in charcoal the night before his head rolled from the block; and of that richest and most magnificent Mayor, Sir John Spencer, holding high revel within its walls, for Queen Bess and so noble a company of courtiers and merchant-adventurers as Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, and Drake and Hawkins. I pictured the virgin Queen, with hook-nose and brick-coloured hair, like her horrible wax effigy that I have seen in Westminster Abbey, in her wide jewel-studded farthingale and monstrous ruff, and red heels to her shoes, being received with ceremony and marshalled through the lofty Gothic doorway, showing her black teeth in coquettish smiles at the stream of compliments and flattery that had ever to be kept flowing to pleasure her vanity, lest the smiles should turn to scowls. 'Twas hard, methought, for poets like Spenser and Sidney to have been bound to waste their muse in singing so perpetually the praises and non-existent charms of their great Gloriana.

My wandering thoughts were recalled abruptly to the present by being hailed by a youth who came up to me with a brisk and easy-going Cavalier air. I could scarce believe my eyes, for 'twas my brother Roger, whom I thought to be far away beneath



REPAIRING THE CITY WALL.

Eastern skies bargaining for silks for his master with turbaned Turks and Arabs. Had he been recalled by the merchant, his apprenticeship to whom had cost my father a sum scraped together with difficulty? If so, why had he writ no word to warn them in Hart Street of his coming? I was for a moment speechless with surprise and misgiving.

‘Well, you do not seem rejoiced to see me, my Lovejoy,’ said he. ‘No cry of joy at thus happening on your devoted and affectionate brother all un-awares. But I am used by this time to frosty welcomes. My father hath not exactly fallen on my neck; I disturbed him, I fear, in the composition of a motet, and Peg declined to kill the fatted calf. Prue scarce paused to greet me in her wrestles with that intricate fantasy of Dr. John Bull’s with thirty variations that she was at when I went away, and the rest all did look at me as if they would ask, What’s brought *you* hither?’

‘A natural question enough, Roger,’ I said, ‘however glad one may be to see you.’

‘You think so? Come, then, dismiss the servant, and I will be your escort, and gratify your curiosity in St. Helen’s Churchyard. We cannot stand a-talking here in the open street, being jostled and rubbed by the passers-by.’

As he said this two ‘prentice boys jogged Roger’s

elbow as they went past, glancing with suspicious contempt at the gold lace on his slashed sleeve. I thought with a pang of Roger's outfit—the holland nightcaps and shirts which I and Penelope had near worked our fingers to the bone over. He could never have worn half of them out, and had perhaps sold them to purchase the suit of fine clothes he had on.

I went with Roger beneath the low gateway of corbelled timber that leads out of the busy hum of Bishopsgate into the shady calm of Great St. Helen's. We sat down under the wide-spreading trees in the peaceful old graveyard, where lie bones of many famous Londoners.

'How delicious cool 'tis here after the tropical countries that I've been in,' said Roger with a contented whistle. 'Nay, Lovejoy; the truth is, I am not cut out for trading in silken stuffs under skies of brass, nor for trading at all, for that matter, so I have given up the whole business.'

'You might have thought whether or no you were cut out for trade ere you put father to so heavy an expense,' I answered. ''Tis very ill conduct, methinks, to give up your apprenticeship so of a sudden without consulting anyone.'

'I hardly knew on leaving Paul's what I had a mind for. But now that there's war in the country,

and you have made a rich match, I have a strong mind to be a soldier. Will you ask your husband to use his influence to obtain for me a captaincy in a Royalist regiment?’

I was fairly taken breathless by Roger’s cool effrontery. He was ever a saucy and troublesome boy, and a care to my father, whom I have heard say that, though Roger was older than me, he could go away and trust his eldest daughter with his house and family, but his eldest son he could scarce trust out of his sight. But ’twas supposed Roger had mended his ways and grown steady when he was bound apprentice to a mercer under the Exchange, and he went abroad full of fine promises. Yet here he is back again, like a bad penny, his air more boastful and full of swagger than of old; and he dares to claim favours from Gabriel through me as if by right.

‘I am sorry that I cannot crave my husband’s charity on your behalf,’ I answered. ‘He hath promised already to bear the expense of Will’s studies at Oxford when he’s finished his schooling, and he knows Will to be deserving, so that his kindness is likely to be well repaid.’

‘So you would rather your husband’s money made a pedant of Will than an officer of me? Welladay, if you won’t intercede for me, I must fall back on

my godmother, the Widow Travers,' said Roger, and again he whistled jauntily.

'Methinks you will go to the wrong quarter if you apply to Dame Travers for a captaincy of Cavalier horse. She shares the populace's passion, 'twould seem, for the Parliament's cause, and has been laying her jewels and money-bags on the floor of the Guildhall.'

'Is that the way the wind blows? I thank you for telling me, Lovejoy. I cannot afford to disagree with my godmother, and so, maybe, shall find it more discreet to fight, after all, for the other side; but to fight for one or t'other I am determined.'

I thought he spoke in this flippant and unprincipled tone to shock me, and so, making no reply to his last speech, I rose, and said 'twas time for me to be on the homeward way, and if he would come to dine at my house he was welcome. He answered that he had appointed to dine at an ordinary with an acquaintance, but would first see me to my door.

At the top of Chancery Lane, Laurel and Silence, going home from an airing with their gentlewoman, followed by Juan, the Spanish footboy, crossed the street in front of us.

'Those are my daughters,' said I.

‘A pretty pair, like a York and Lancaster rose,’ Roger said. ‘Methinks ’tis the pale rose pleases me most. Is it she who is deaf and dumb? Yes? Well, I am not so sure that ’t isn’t a blessing in the guise of an affliction. She can never scold her husband, or sing out of tune, and she seems to listen with her eyes, that gives ’em a mighty pretty look.’

Roger would have it that he regretted his appointment at the ordinary, which would delay his being presented to his fair step-nieces, as he chooses to dub them. He hoped ’twas only a pleasure deferred till the morrow, as, with blithe insouciance, he doffed his cap and took leave of me, bearing, it would seem, no grudge for my sisterly plainness of speech.

I turned my head for a moment before going in, to watch him step airily down the street, and I marvelled much at his self-assurance, and thought of what a fresh source of anxiety his unexpected reappearance in the family would be to my father. Then my eye fell on a face, regular of feature, cadaverous of hue, framed in red hair, that came out into the September sunlight from the dark shadows cast by the great gateway of Lincoln’s Inn. ’Twas the face which had looked over the wall the day Laurel had sung to Hugh in the garden.

November 7.

The expected great battle was fought at Edgehill, in Warwickshire, on October 24. Both sides have taken the honour of victory to themselves, but of 5,000 slain most fell on the King's side.

After the fight, the King marched to Oxford, where he intends to quarter for the winter; and his General of the Horse, Prince Rupert, is making such bold excursions therefrom, and sallies so far out, that the City of London is in a panic, and the Lord General Essex, instead of following the King, has come back to Westminster, quartering his forces in the villages around.

My brother Roger's war fever was so inflamed when 'twas known for certain a battle was to be fought that he did go off and enlist precipitately in the King's army, forgetful of that prudent regard for his godmother's sympathies which he spoke of to me. He hath writ since to Hart Street an account of the fray, and his share in it—very glorious, according to his own account. And now he is a full-blown hero in Peg and Prue's eyes, and, belike, in Laurel's too. But I cannot easily forget his breach of contract with his master, and the heavy trial it has been to my father, who, only through personal friendship with the merchant, has prevailed on him not to let the law punish Roger for breaking his indentures. Out of

consideration and regard for my father, this merchant will even allow Tim to take up Roger's apprenticeship when he leaves school next year.

At present Tim spends most of his time out of school hours toiling, with an orange cockade in his hat, on the new earthworks, that grow and grow, and are designed to encircle Westminster and the suburbs as far as Shoreditch on the north and St. George's Fields on the south. East and west the fortifications are to stretch from Hyde Park to Mile End and the Lea.

Mr. Waller, who comes often to smoke a pipe of tobacco with Gabriel, told us of the great honour he had seen paid by both Houses to-day to Lord Essex, who, in reward for his 'pains and valour,' was presented with £5,000. Though still holding his seat in the rebellious House of Commons, Mr. Waller is suffered to speak of its proceedings with great sharpness and freedom.

'In spite of all the clanking of steel and building of forts,' said he, 'the City is shaking in its shoes, and the Parliament meditate sending a commission to treat with His Majesty for peace. I, for one, would be their willing servant on such an errand.'

Laurel, who held her lute in her lap, for she had not long before been singing 'Go, Lovely Rose,' to the author's delighted satisfaction, looked up, and said:

‘Why do you hold with the Parliament, sir, when at heart you love the King?’

Methought Mr. Waller gave a slight start, and he elevated his fine eyebrows till they near touched the frizzed light-brown hair that crowns his high forehead, and falls on either side of his oval, olive-skinned face.

‘Dear young lady, are you a reader of hearts as well as a nightingale?’ he said. Then added: ‘’Tis possible to love the King, and yet not to be blind to his faults, and the evil they have done the kingdom.’

‘But the King can do no wrong!’ Laurel made retort, with heightened colour.

‘So Mistress Laurel has imbibed the doctrines of Mr. Hobbes,’ laughed the poet to Gabriel.

‘She expresses herself overboldly, I fear,’ her father said.

‘Nay. To misquote Master Shakespeare, she does but talk as familiarly of politics as most maids of thirteen do of puppy-dogs.’

‘And, if it please you, I am fourteen,’ said Laurel.

‘A great age, certainly,’ Mr. Waller replied, ‘though I should have thought you more.’

And, indeed, Laurel has the stature and carriage of an older maiden, if in some ways she is younger than her years.

When Mr. Waller invited her to sing another of his Sacharissa lyrics, and said, with polished courtesy, that to be sung by her did add another *laurel* to his poor bays, she accepted the compliment with the unblushing innocence of a child.

November 9.

Days are now set apart, by order of those in power, for prayer and fasting, and this day being so observed, and no shops opened on that account, Gabriel and I went, at noon, to Cheapside, and begged Master Haynes's leave to bring Hugh home with us to stay till nightfall.

A servant admitted us, and led us through the deserted shop upstairs to the spacious parlour, and in a few minutes Master Haynes came down from his private laboratory at the top of the house. His spectacles were pushed back on his forehead, and his eyes shone piercingly from his wan face. The straggling hair beneath his scarlet skull-cap was more dishevelled than ever. He looked as if he had spent the night in sleepless communing with the stars.

'He is not here,' Master Haynes said. 'Your foster-son is gone forth with the rest and my daughter to where all the world and his wife are flocking to-day to hear stirring words. You will

find him at the Guildhall.' Then, as we turned to go, he added: 'I can speak well of him. The lad teems with inventiveness, but he curbs his ingenuity in order to ground himself in the rudiments of his craft. That is the secret of all sure climbing, and 'tis not too early to prophesy, perhaps, that your foster-son will climb high in the dialler's art. His maternal relations, with whom I have a distant kinship, will one day, methinks, have reason to claim him with pride.'

Gabriel said, when we were in the street again, that 'twas pleasant to hear so good an account of Hugh from Master Haynes. Yet I have a fancy that 'tis an effort to him to take a fatherly interest in Hugh, although he has so generously performed a father's duties towards him. Why I cannot tell, for Hugh is all a grateful and respectful son should be.

What a scene it was we saw as we came near the Guildhall! In the face of such scenes all thoughts of peace seem idle, despite the King having declared he is grieved for his people's sufferings, and having consented to receive the Parliament's propositions.

In the gray, chill November mist that had crept up from the river, and hung like a veil over pinnacle and buttress, a tall, gaunt figure stood on the steps of the Guildhall, speaking impassioned words to a crowd of eager listeners. 'Twas Lord

Brooke, a General of the Parliamentary forces, who had fought at Edgehill, the most rigid of Puritans, for all his noble lineage, and unbending of the King's foes. He was clad from head to foot in purple, with a burnished breastplate of silver. Far as my sympathies were from him, I could but feel, despite myself, a thrill at what he spake :

'Citizens of London, you must not think to fight in the sighs of your wives and children. Therefore, when you hear the drums beat, say not, I beseech you, "I am not of the trained band," nor this, nor that, nor the other, but doubt not to go out to the work, and this shall be the day of your deliverance. What is it we fight for? It is for our religion, and for our God, and for our liberty, and all. And what is it they fight for? For their lusts, for their wills, and for their tyranny; to make us slaves, and to overthrow all. Gentlemen, methinks I see your courage in your faces. . . .'

Deeply stirred, some in the breathless, listening throng spoke forth, nigh sobbing :

'Ay, we have the courage and the resolution. We'll go out to-morrow.'

The General ceased, and as the people began to disperse, I saw Hugh standing, his red head bared, with Mistress Margaret, in a sober dove-coloured cloak and hood, beside him.

I went to him, and said that his master would give him leave to come with us to the Gray House and spend the day with Laurel and Silence.

He hesitated a moment, then answered :

‘It will greatly pleasure me to come, but first I must see Mistress Margaret safely home.’

The pink cheeks under the dove-coloured hood grew pinker.

‘Do not come, Hugh l’Estrange,’ the Puritan maiden said. ‘I need no escort for so small a distance.’

But when she made as if she would trip off alone, Hugh followed her.

It struck me then that Hugh is highly favoured by Master Haynes to be the one chosen out of his large number of prentices to act as his daughter’s escort, or is it that Mistress Margaret herself doth prefer Hugh to any of her old admirers?

November 30.

Whilst peace was still being talked of, the King’s artillery fell on the Parliament’s forces at Brentford, and again there was a great and bloody fight, and, as at Edgehill, both sides reported themselves conquerors. The thunder of the cannon awoke us from our sleep, and we realized how near us were drawing the perils of war.

Excitement grew all over London, the citizens being enraged afresh against the King for trying thus to enter the capital at the sword's point, as they said, under the cloak of peaceful professions.

The whole night through after that fight at Brentford drums were beating and forces mustering, and on Sunday morning, being November 14, reinforcements poured forth to the strength of 24,000 men, and were reviewed on Turnham Green. But Lord Essex was too cautious to risk another battle, otherwise, 'tis said, the King might have been caught in a net and routed, instead of being allowed to get back, scot-free, to loyal Oxford.

My father, who was here this morning to give Laurel her lesson on the harpsichon, told us that when London was a-trembling for fear of the King's invasion, Mr. Milton affixed outside the door of his lodgings in Aldersgate Street a sonnet claiming from the invaders the reverence shown to the city of Euripides, and by Alexander the Great to the poet of Thebes.

'It happened,' said my father, 'that some foreign travellers were admiring the tombs in St. Olave's, and, as I came from the organs, one asked me to direct them to the present dwelling of Mr. Milton, the famous scholar, and author of "Penseroso" and "Lycidas." They had already seen, they said, the house at the

sign of the Spread Eagle, in Bread Street, where he was born. As I was going that way, I offered to show them the house, and there was the sonnet, nailed to the door, in Mr. Milton's own handwriting. The foreign gentlemen said it well repaid their journey out of Italy to read it.'

My father has writ down the lines for me to copy in my day-book :

'Captain or colonel or knight in arms,
 Whose chance on these defenceless doors may seize ;
 If deed of honour did thee ever please,
 Guard them, and him within protect from harms ;
 He can requite thee, for he knows the charms
 That call fame on such gentle acts as these,
 And he can spread thy name o'er land and seas,
 Whatever clime the sun's bright circle warms.
 Lift not thy spear against the Muses' bower ;
 The great Emathian conqueror did spare
 The House of Pindarus, when temple and tower
 Went to the ground, and the repeated air
 Of sad Electra's poet had the power
 To save the Athenian walls from ruin bare.'

December 18.

We were invited this evening, at Sir John Harrison's house in Bishopsgate, to a party of music, which was interrupted by the arrest of our good host. Mr. William Lawes was present, and my father, with the boys Will and Tim, who had been bidden to bring their viols. After supper the concert had opened

with a piece of Dr. John Bull's for five viols and organ. Then had come canzonets for three voices and soft Italian madrigals.

The dark oak chamber we were gathered together in was lighted with flambeaux at the corners and a chandelier of waxen tapers in the centre. Looking from the windows, it seemed almost as if one could step into the richly-furnished interior of Sir Paul Pindar's house opposite, every room of which was likewise lit up. Music-books and instruments were littered about the room in which we sat, and a sweet air of Luca Marenzio's, which Mr. Lawes said the Muses themselves might not have been ashamed to compose, yet lingered in the beams, when a servant appeared in the doorway. Ere he could deliver himself of what he would say, some men, armed and with their hats still on their heads, rudely pushed by the servant and came and laid hands on Sir John Harrison.

'No need to announce us,' said one; 'we are servants of the Parliament.'

'And I am a member of the Parliament,' said Sir John.

'Ay, a member who absents himself from all its councils, and so one who 'tis deemed may as well sit in it across seas in company with others of his quality who are suspected of brewing mischief at home.'

Both his daughters repeated with a cry of horror, 'Across seas!' and then ran to their father.

'Yes; take your farewell of him, for it's many a long day, perchance, before you will see him again,' said the Parliament's officer brutally.

Sir John is of a great height, and Anne so small and fairylike. He looked a giant as he took her in his arms and soothed her fears.

'We shall not be parted for long, dear sweetheart,' he said in French, lowering his voice. 'Take care of Meg, and our cousin Young and his wife will take care of you both.' Then, turning to his guests, he asked their pardon for being thus obliged to speed their departure. 'I must accompany these gentlemen, it seems,' he said, 'though Heaven knows what they want with me.'

'We want those papers of the Revenue you have in your possession. 'Tis the Parliament's order that you give them up.'

''Tis no use searching for them here. They must be fetched from another place,' Sir John said; and I noticed he looked more hopeful at mention of the papers.

He bade us all good-night and God-speed, and entrusted his girls to Gabriel and me. We brought them hither in our coach, to tarry with us till they have news from their father. Margaret, the younger,

was so affrighted for him that she wept and wailed all the way, but Anne quickly regained her spirits, and declares she has every confidence in her father getting loose.

Christmastide, 1642.

Anne Harrison and her sister are still with us. Laurel so worships Anne that she hopes she may stay for ever, but Silence is as indifferent to her as she is to other people, with the exception of Hugh l'Estrange.

We went to morning prayers in great St. Paul's, and heard the Christmas anthem composed by Dr. Child. How the voices of the choir soared into the vaulted roof, and the rich, swelling organ-notes rolled through the vast building! 'Tis the organ that draws the soul upwards in praise of the Most High as no other instrument could ever do, methinks; and I thrill and vibrate to its mighty waves of sound, though since I was married I have scarce touched the organ myself, Gabriel thinking I now lack the strength to play on it.

We came down the long aisle of the nave after the service, where, as usual, assembled to lounge, promenade, and gossip, were a motley crew, when Anne Harrison suddenly caught my arm and exclaimed:

'See, there is my father, alone and free!'

Sir John came up to us and, leading the way to a secluded spot in the cloisters, he told us that on pretext of fetching the papers his captors had demanded, he had evaded them. He was now resolved to start forthwith for Oxford, and would, when safely there, have his daughters follow him thither.

'But why may we not bear you company now?' asked Anne.

'Because I would fain provide accommodation for you first. Oxford is full to overflowing, and I know not if I can find a place to lay my head when I get there.'

He then bade us a hurried farewell, for, said he, every moment he lingered increased the danger of his being recaptured. Anne was content to come home with us again and take part in our Christmas-tide revels, and she does enliven us all with her bright company and merry quips.

February, 1643.

Last week a messenger came from Oxford, bearing a letter for Anne from her father. In it he said that he had now found some rooms above a baker's shop, and would fain have his daughters come to him in these humble quarters at once. So our guests began to prepare for an instant departure. The house in

Bishopsgate Street had been shamefully plundered, and a Puritan guard was still installed there. These two fair girls, who had never known what 'twas to lack every possible comfort and luxury in their town and country homes, were now without money and clothes, except those they had on their backs.

Anne would not let me give them more than a few necessary garments, which she thrust herself into a cloak-bag, in great haste and impatience to obey her father's summons.

'Who will be there to see the creases,' said she, 'in the baker's shop? And, belike, we may have to exchange the baker's shop for a tent before long, and then fine clothes would certainly be out of place.'

They rid away in the early freshness of the soft, mild day, with but a single servant behind them, bearing their cloak-bags, and methought Anne had never looked more radiant.

Laurel ran out after them across the courtyard, waving her handkerchief and calling 'Bon voyage!' as she watched them out of sight. Then she came back slowly, and said, with a great pathological sigh:

'Ay, how fain would I be going too!'

'To face hardships and, maybe, misadventure?' I said.

'Hardships and misadventure in the King's service

in loyal Oxford, methinks, were far more to my liking than ease and no adventure in great disloyal London. I hate the Puritans, with their psalms and their earthworks. I wonder how any who are not against the King can bear to abide in London. And, mother,' she went on, 'I do so much love my sweet cousin Mistress Anne. I feel I would gladly follow her to the end of the earth, or do anything for her sake—ay, be her slave.'

'Instead of Silence's slave,' I could not refrain from saying, though, to be sure, 'twas an unwise remark, with Silence standing by, her great eyes fixed searchingly on our lips.

A flush of wrath dyed the pure pallor of her cheek. In a volley of signs she poured forth passionate reproaches. Then she scribbled wildly on her tablets. Did Laurel, too, now love someone better than her? Was she to lose Laurel as she had lost Hugh? Would Laurel ever dare to go away from her? If so, Silence would be too miserable to live. Silence would certainly die.'

And Laurel, full of repentant concern, threw her arms round her sister, caressing and reassuring her with a thousand endearing words. Silence came before everyone else in the world, she vowed, and never would Laurel go anywhere without her, unless Silence wished.

I had it not in my heart to warn Laurel that 'twas rash to make such vows, or to tell her that I believed a separation at some time would be wholesome for these two sisters, who are so closely bound to one another by the tie of poor Silence's affliction.

VI

August 10, 1643.

'TIS not because the spring and summer have been barren of events to record that I have been so long idle with my pen. The chief cause thereof has been the birth of my little Olave, who first saw the light in June in the green velvet lying-in chamber that overlooks the courtyard. For some weeks afterwards I was near sick to death from weakness and fever, but now I am on the mending hand, and able to be busied with my usual occupations in the preserving-room and the spicery and at my spinning-wheel.

'Twas my fancy that the baby-boy should be christened after the Viking saint whose name has been so familiar to me from early childhood, since I first heard the strains of the organ, and learned to worship God at my mother's side in the church in Hart Street. He is a lusty little fellow, my babe Olave, not unlike his uncle Jack, with the bluest of eyes and the yellowest of hair—so much as he has of

hair—and so his name doth suit him well enough. I have left him now crowing in his deep-rockered oak cradle upstairs, with his nurse, old Marie, singing a French hushabye at the head, and Silence at the foot gazing on him with rapture. For Silence holds Olave in even greater dearness than she does the spaniels, the birds, and the squirrel, and all dumb and helpless creatures. Since Olave came methinks Silence shows signs of being more disposed to love me, or, at any rate, to accept my love, for which I am thankful. She has been much engaged of late in broidering in secrecy some device or other, which Laurel says is to be a surprise for me when 'tis finished.

And now I am once more here in the carnation closet at my oaken desk in the oriel, and see that I have not writ aught in this book since the day Anne Harrison and her sister left us for Oxford. It seems a long time ago, and we have had no more news of Anne, after a letter she penned me in March saying that after living in as much comfort as they had always done 'twas strange to find themselves as poor as Job, sojourning in a garret at a baker's house in a back-street. 'But 'tis the lot of many others of quality here besides ourselves,' she did add. 'And I must needs say that most bear being packed together in poor quarters, and seeing perpetually the sad

spectacle of sickness, plague, and other evils of war, with a martyr-like cheerfulness.'

'And I, too, would bear such discomforts cheerfully for the King,' Laurel said, when I read her the letter.

But Laurel's life has not been without some of the excitements of these stirring times, as I will relate. In April so many cries on both sides were heard again for peace that negotiations had been opened, only to break down as the last had done, the King refusing indignantly to abolish Episcopacy, and to give up to the Parliament his darling right of commanding the militia.

Whilst men were talking of peace, Mr. Waller came more frequently than usual to the Gray House, sometimes in company with his brother-in-law, one Mr. Tomkins, Clerk of the Queen's Council, who had a numerous acquaintance and great influence in the City, and who I have heard say at our table that he knew many were opposed to the violent measures of the Parliament and favoured the King at heart, though fear concealed their loyalty.

'Twas a few days after the negotiations for peace had been broken off that these two gentlemen came into Gabriel's study when he was out, which is divided only by the arras from the library, where Laurel and Hugh l'Estrange were playing at chess.

While waiting for the return of their host, they began to discuss very freely a plot they had on foot to seize the leaders of the Parliament, take possession of the military defences, and let the Royal forces into London.

Laurel listened, she told me afterwards, too extraordinarily fascinated to stir for a few moments; then Hugh took her queen and said, 'Check.' The little word fell on a pause in the conversation, and, being heard behind the arras, brought Mr. Waller and Mr. Tomkins instantly into the room, wearing white, scared faces.

Laurel turned from the chess-board and faced Mr. Waller. I know how she looked, methinks, though I was not there to see. Her stately little head held high on its brown stem of a neck, her lustrous eyes full of understanding.

'We have heard what was not intended for our ears belike,' said she boldly.

'Yes; through our incautionsness you have been made participator in a great secret,' Mr. Waller answered, his eyes falling to the rosette on his shoe. 'But you are a young lady of honour, a King's woman, though the daughter of a neutral. Is it not so? You are to be trusted not to make known to any living soul what thus by accident hath come to your knowledge?'

‘In sooth you may trust me, sir,’ was Laurel’s reply. ‘I will not breathe a word of it. I would liefer bite my tongue in two than use it to injure the King.’

Mr. Waller then raised his eyes in relief and admiration.

‘Brava! that is well spoken,’ said he. ‘I see we may count on a new ally.’

‘But ’tis necessary,’ said Mr. Waller’s confederate, ‘to gain the same assurances from this young man.’

He glanced uneasily at Hugh’s cropped head and prentice’s jerkin.

‘I can answer for his honour as well as my own,’ Laurel made haste to say.

‘Yet, to make assurance doubly sure, we would fain hear him answer for himself,’ persisted Mr. Tomkins.

Hugh sat fingering the chess-men, and did not speak. Then Mr. Waller bent over Hugh with something of a threat in his insinuating manner.

‘Swear it!’ he muttered ’twixt his teeth. ‘We cannot be content till you take your oath on’t.’

Still Hugh said nothing.

‘To please me, Hugh,’ Laurel urged—‘to please me, you will surely satisfy these gentlemen and take your oath on’t.’

Hugh jumped to his feet.

‘No, I will not!’ said he resolutely. ‘I will not

take my oath on't! I will not be forced against my will to conspire in this plot, which, if hatched, may, for all I know, be the cause of slaughter and bloodshed and lamentation throughout the length and breadth of London.'

Just then Gabriel's step was heard coming to the study.

Laurel's eyes must have blazed with anger as she cried:

'Then, Hugh, I will never, never play chess with you again!'

When she told me the story, much as I have writ it here, after the ill-starred plot had been discovered, Mr. Waller imprisoned and Mr. Tomkins hung at his front-door, Laurel explained that she had meant a great deal that there was not time to say by these words, 'I will never play chess with you again,' and that Hugh knew it. She meant that there would be no more reading and singing beneath the rustling trees, no more confidences permitted about the original dial Hugh had designed and was constructing in his private hours—in fact, that the old sisterly comradeship of Blois days was over. And Hugh, I think, accepted his dismissal from Laurel, though Silence's unchanged devotion and his respect for Gabriel still brought him afterwards on holy days to the Gray House.

'Twas on the last day of May that the plot came out—how, and through whom, no one seemed to know. The gentlemen of the Parliament were in St. Margaret's, at Westminster, listening attentively to a sermon, for 'twas one of their solemn fasts, when a messenger entered the church, and brought the news to Mr. Pym, who whispered it to those sitting near him, causing great consternation among the rest of the congregation. Immediately guards were sent to apprehend Mr. Waller and his brother-in-law.

The said Mr. Waller was so confounded with fear that he made a most complete confession of the whole affair, telling all he knew of himself and all he suspected of others. He made no concealment of names—accused the Earl of Portland and Lord Conway of co-operating in the transaction, and said the Earl of Northumberland, too, was in favour of any attempt against the Parliament, and of reconciliation with the King. He mentioned the ladies to whom, on the credit of his wit and reputation, he had been admitted, and how they had encouraged him to oppose the proceedings of the Houses. Altogether, the courtly orator and poet played a coward's part, and so did his fellow-conspirator, Mr. Tomkins, who, when seized, revealed another plot that Sir Nicholas Crisp had been brewing side

by side with his own, which was to raise a regiment for the King within the City. For that purpose the King had sent the Royalist merchant a commission of array from Oxford by the Lady Aubigny, who delivered it up to Mr. Tomkins on receiving from him the appointed token. He had buried it in his garden, and now, on his arrest, ordered it to be dug up. He and another of the conspirators were sentenced to be hung, but Mr. Waller, the most guilty, affected such sorrow and remorse of conscience that his trial was postponed out of Christian compassion.

After an interval, made use of by him in further confession, submission, lamentation, flattery, and supplication, he was expelled the House, fined, and sent to prison for a year. When this was known, Sir Oracle said he feared that Mr. Waller had bought his life by dissimulation, and Laurel had not a word to say in defence of one on whose heroical daring on behalf of the King she had built great expectations, doomed to disappointment.

Laurel has given up singing 'Go, Lovely Rose.'

During June and July the war has raged all over the country, and from every quarter news comes of success for the King's party—of battles won and towns taken. London is mightily dispirited thereat, and some blame the defensive generalship of Lord

Essex, and would have had him replaced by Colonel Hampden, whose regiment of green-coats hath done the Parliament stirring service. But on June 25 Colonel Hampden died of a wound gotten in a skirmish with Prince Rupert at Chalgrove Field, in his own county of Bucks. They say the last words he spake were, 'God save my bleeding country.' I shall never forget his face as I saw it in the boat that January day—the day of his bloodless victory at the beginning of these troubles. I cannot but hold, with Gabriel, that the citizens have cause to mourn the loss of a leader so great and just as was Colonel Hampden, though an enemy of the King.

The surrender of Bristol to Prince Rupert has brought up the question of peace again, and the Commons have been debating fiercely proposals for peace made by the Lords. One day the Mayor and his Aldermen come to Westminster with a great rabble behind them and petition against peace; the next, women to the number of several hundreds come, with white ribands in their hats, and clamour at the Commons House in favour of peace.

At noon yesterday 5,000 women (some men in women's garb, 'tis said) were gathered there, raving about the doors: 'Peace! let us have peace! Give us the traitors who are against peace! Give us that dog Pym!'

On our way to dine with an acquaintance in Petty France, my husband and I were spectators of such a scene of riot and terror as I had never before witnessed. As this struggling mob of excited viragoes refused to disperse, the Parliament's guards did fire on them, and it happened, just as our coach held up, because impeded by the crowd, a ballad-singer, waving a white silk flag in her brawny hand, was struck by a ball, and fell dead in the midst of the wild song with which she had been inciting her companions. Many got their faces and hands slashed by the troop of cavalry that finally scattered the throng, leaving eight wounded or dead on the ground.

Such proceedings as these are not likely to forward the cause of peace, Gabriel says. I was near to fainting for fright at the sight of those fierce peace-makers flying from under the horses' feet, and when our destination was reached could scarce recover enough to partake of the cheer our friends offered us.

At table the talk was mostly of the low ebb the Parliament's fortunes are now reached, of Lord Essex's broken ranks, which are so thinned and wasted by disease, and of the King's proposed march on London, in the flush of his triumphs, with his own army and the army of the North, under Lord Newcastle.

This rumoured march is sending Londoners forth to work on the earthworks and forts for twelve miles round London with renewed vigour. They go daily in a body of thousands, with colours flying and drums beating—tailors, watchmen, shoemakers, and oyster-women—to dig at their appointed place of labour, and one cannot but feel they are mightily inspired by the extremity of a newly-threatened danger.

August 15.

We were treated to-day in the Spring Garden at Knightsbridge by my old Lady Armytage, who is set on winning Gabriel's consent to a match 'twixt Laurel and one of the two clownish youths who are her grandsons.

'Twas pleasant, on this fair summer day, to saunter about the green glades and lawns beneath the shade of umbrageous limes, whose perfume was beyond description sweet. The sky was deepest blue, with shining white clouds heaped upon it like mountain-ranges, and the warm wind made music in the tree-tops.

Laurel was not troubled long by her clownish suitor, for, after some awkward bowings and scrapings and clumsy flatteries, prompted by his lady grandmother, naught—not even Laurel's bright eyes—

could keep him from the bowling-green, where gallants bowled and betted, watched eagerly by some of the ladies in the company.

The desertion of her cavalier seemed rather to delight than to distress Laurel, and she and Silence, with their arms entwined, forgetting their company demeanours, ran, like a pair of boys, to the edge of the lake, where they fed the swans and waterfowl with little sweet cakes they had taken from a table spread with silver and dainties under the trees.

Admiring glances from both sexes followed the unconscious and graceful motions of my step-daughters, and I needs must feel proud of my relationship to them.

Lady Eleanor Davies, in a scarlet petticoat and yellow-plumed hat, who was among Lady Armytage's guests, rolled her wild black orbs in their sunken sockets, and asked me searching questions about Silence, which my somewhat short answers did not discourage.

Had not the power of seeing the unseen which those wondrous gray eyes, without a doubt, possessed been exercised? She would dearly love to try an experiment to demonstrate this rare maid's gift of sight. Would we permit it?

'You may have heard,' said the Lady Eleanor, 'of that marvel of a deaf boy that the justices of he

peace would not allow me to harbour beneath my roof, calling him witch and vagrant by reason of his gift of prophecy. He could manifest easily what was contained in sealed letters or enclosed in secret cabinets, and tell the exact number of pence or peppercorns in a bag or box before 'twas opened. So 'tis sometimes made amends to those who are short of a sense by being endowed with extra keenness in another.'

'I have only remarked,' I answered, 'that Silence hath perhaps a quicker and more sensitive eye than most for beauty of shapes and colour, which she shows in her needlework and broidery. But there is naught of the supernatural in that.'

'And you would fain have nothing that smacks of the supernatural cultivated, madam. Whereas I hold, on the contrary, that a supernatural gift should no more be neglected than a gift for painting, music, or dancing.'

She spoke this with so vehement an emphasis, and leaned her dark haggard face under the weirdly-nodding yellow plumes so close to mine, that I felt relieved when a third person came towards us and interrupted our *tête-à-tête*. Yet I was none the less interested to have met and talked with this amazing woman, of whom I had often heard strange tales. 'Tis said that her gloomy prophecies do now so

plague the Queen that she will not have her about the Court at Oxford. Two years after her marriage with King Charles the Lady Eleanor waiting on her Majesty coming from Mass, the Queen, then in the heyday of her youth and happiness, asked the prophetess how long 'twould last, her being happy. The reply was sixteen years, and, this having proved pretty true belike, the Queen, who is hopeful and ever prone to look on the bright side, fears to know more of the lady's forecasts.

When 'twas become generally known in the company that Lady Eleanor Davies was present, many ladies and gallants flocked about her, begging to have their fortunes told. I was sorry that whilst this folly was going on Laurel and Silence came back from the lake, for the sight of the latter approaching distracted Lady Eleanor from her fortune-telling. She broke off abruptly in the fluent formulas with which 'tis her habit to gratify the vulgar curiosity of ladies and gentlemen concerning their future, and laid her hands on Silence's shoulders, looking straight into her face with great solemnity. Her eyes rolled and the yellow plumes nodded terrifically, as, after contemplating Silence for some moments thus, she declared :

'One day by a miracle this fair child's tongue will be loosed and her ears unstopped.'

Silence had turned her head aside ; for there are lips she will make no effort to read, and methought the wide gaps 'twixt Lady Eleanor's discoloured teeth revolted her fastidious eye. She was restive as a spirited pony, and tried to wriggle free of the clutch of the prophetess's shrivelled and much-bejewelled hands, that held her shoulders in a vice.

But Laurel has no such squeamishness. Her face illumined with joy at the words Lady Eleanor had spoken. She lifted the hem of the flaunting scarlet petticoat to her lips.

'Oh, my lady,' said she in melting tones, 'what dear news is this you give us! What dear news! Only, my lady, tell us, I pray, when and how the miracle will be performed.'

'The manner of it I know not, but the time will be when the unparalleled troubles that now rend the kingdom asunder are drawing to their close, and the happy restoration of peace within sight.'

'Oh, may that time not be far off, then!' Laurel said with fervour.

There had been a diversion to the bowling-alley, where Sir John Suckling, who writ 'The Session of Poets,' and also is reputed to be the most daring bowler and gamester of his time, had come on the scene. The rumour that he was to be seen bowling had drawn attention from the picturesque group

which the prophetess, with Laurel and Silence, made beneath the tent-like boughs of a wide-spreading ash.

'Twas well, thought I, that Silence had understood nothing of the talked-of miracle, and I told Laurel 'twere better to let her remain in ignorance, for fear her hopes might be raised to expect something that would never come to pass.

At this Lady Eleanor took pet; she cast a withering glance at me. 'You have broke the spell,' she muttered, and released Silence from her grasp, then swept away without another word.

We, too, now took the path to the bowling-alley in search of Gabriel, and beheld the magnet that had drawn nearly the whole company thither. Not tall of stature, but elegantly made, his nose red and his beard curled upwards, in glorious apparel, Sir John Suckling's laughter echoed through the alley as his bowl drove another from the jack. He had lost a thousand pounds since he entered Spring Garden that afternoon, but for all that was in uproarious spirits, for he thinks, they say, that to be splendid and merry is the best method of courting good fortune.

Two young ladies, weeping distressfully, stood on the edge of the bowling-green, and Gabriel told me they were Sir John's sisters, who had come here uninvited by Lady Armytage, driven by fear that

their brother would lose all their portions. 'Twas piteous to see them, but their tears were little heeded by the gay and fashionable onlookers.

In marked contrast to Sir John Suckling's rubicund countenance was the face of the bowler who stood next him. 'Twas of livid hue, near to resembling that of a dead man, though the eyes were alive and restless. Almost directly I remembered having seen this face before; indeed, it doth haunt my memory whenever my eye falls on that part of the garden-wall at the Gray House where I first saw it.

'Who is it, he who is now casting his bowl?' I asked of my husband.

'He is known to me by sight, but not by name. Methinks he has sometimes had a lodging in the neighbouring house to ours in Chancery Lane.' Then Gabriel added: 'The gentleman bears some likeness to Hugh l'Estrange.'

'Father!' exclaimed Laurel, 'Hugh at least has no evil look. 'Tis because this man has red hair that you see a resemblance in him to Hugh.'

Laurel's voice, clear as a bell, seemed to reach the ear of the person in question, for in the midst of his occupation he turned round suddenly and regarded her with an earnest scrutiny.

'Silence is aweary of this assembly,' said Laurel, 'and would fain be driving homewards.'

I, too, was beginning to tire of the match at bowls, and to feel myself out of tune with the spectators of it and their light chatter and laughter, so Gabriel sent a servant to call our coach.

All was peace and beauty as we drove through fair Hyde Park in the golden rays of the setting sun. The sound of wheels scarce disturbed the pheasants from their leisurely struts abroad, and a herd of white-spotted fawns did not wheel round till we came quite close to them. The coo of the wood-pigeon and the throstle's evening song filled the air with sweet melody. Leaving the park behind, we came to pass that great mound which is being thrown up at this point in the line of new fortifications, and here were toilers busy throwing up the earth, though 'twas past sunset. Despite the news that the King has deferred his march on London because Lord Newcastle could not come from the North to join him, and has gone instead to besiege in his royal person the 'godly' little city of Gloucester, the only stronghold left to the Parliament in the West, the people of London are determined to complete their defences, and have not abated a jot of their enthusiasm.

How different was the strained and eager attitude of these figures outlined above us against the rosy sky from that of the pleasure-seeking folk at loll in

Spring Garden ; and those who laboured were not all of the rough working classes, for side by side with tailors and oyster-wenches, knights and gently-bred ladies, with their lace ruffles turned up, and white hands bare of rings, wielded the spade and mattock, and gloried to work by the sweat of their brow in such a cause.

At the foot of the mound a pair were resting—a youth and a girl—who had, judging from their spent looks, borne their full share of the heat and burden of the August day. The girl's spade lay on the ground, as she let down her gray skirt and smoothed back the locks of soft, fair hair that had strayed out from her muslin cap over her hot face.

'See, there are Hugh and Mistress Margaret Haynes,' said Laurel.

But Silence had seen Hugh first, and was leaning over the coach door, making signs and calling him with her eyes.

Hugh did not obey the call, for the simple reason, methought, that he was unaware of it. His whole attention was riveted on his companion, whom he was trying to persuade to refresh herself with milk from a pewter vessel that he held towards her, whilst she appeared to be too engaged with the refractory locks to think of slaking her thirst.

The coach drove onwards, and Silence sank down

in her seat at Laurel's side, her supple fingers twitching at a fold in her kirtle, her eyes brimful of disappointment.

Hitherto Silence has accepted the existence of a Mistress Margaret with the utmost composure and indifference, for truly on the Sundays and holidays that Hugh comes to us there might be no such person as Mistress Margaret. He never so much as mentions her name, unless 'tis in reply to Laurel's mocking question respecting her. To Silence he is always the same Hugh—the heroical Hugh who saved her from the jaws of the wolf; the patient Hugh who suffered her to follow him to Monsieur Pierre's the goldsmith, to the fairs at Blois, and to the forest, and on all his boyish excursions; the kind Hugh who gave her his pocket-dial, and kissed the back of her neck when he went away to Master Haynes, at the sign of the Tortoise, in Cheapside.

But Laurel has been scornfully jealous of Mistress Margaret from the first moment she saw her. Yet 'tis a singular kind of jealousy, being not for herself, methinks, so much as for Silence.

'Did he really not see, or did he feign not to see?' Laurel asked indignantly, taking one of Silence's hands in hers, and stroking it as if it were some ruffled, fluttering bird.

''Tis not like Hugh to feign aught,' said I. 'If it

were, he would have feigned that day to Mr. Waller that he would hold his tongue.'

'I have never forgiven him for it,' Laurel said, and her young face flushed, and was sternly set; 'though I will say this much, that I don't believe 'twas through Hugh's tattle that the plot got out.'

'There can be no question about it. The affair was so feebly and incautiously contrived that 'twas known in a dozen hostile quarters at least,' Gabriel said with decision.

Laurel said no more, and fell again to the comforting of Silence, which was hardly accomplished by the time we reached the Gray House.

The clouds only cleared from Silence's brow when she was in the nursery with old Marie, and laughing, wakeful King Olave in her lap, she playing with his pink toes in dumb-show :

'This little pig went to market ;
This little pig stayed at home.'

Then her rare smiles broke forth, and Silence looked happy.

August 25.

I can scarce believe that but a few days ago I writ of Silence looking happy, for now her aspect is most woeful. Not Bobbo the squirrel, using his bushy tail as a sail wherewith to swim across

Olave's bath ; not Olave dashing his fists at Marie's dangling rosary ; nor, indeed, any pranks of squirrel or baby, can now set the curves round Silence's lips a-dimpling. She will be left alone with that piece of embroidery she is at work on in secret, and even Laurel dare not offer her consolation. Silence is inconsolable because Hugh has gone further away from her than Cheapside.

Yesterday, with the consent of his master, Hugh marched forth in the ranks of one of the four regiments of train-bands that have volunteered to follow the army of my Lord Essex to the relief of Gloucester.

We were in ignorance of his resolution, and he took no direct farewell of us. But last evening Mistress Margaret Haynes, attended by one of her father's men, came hither, and asked if she might speak with me or with Mistress Laurel Young.

I received her in the withdrawing room through the hall, and begged her to sit down.

She seated herself primly on the edge of a stool, with her hands clasped in front of her. The great heat had, methought, faded the roses in her cheeks, for she was near as pale as the jasmine stars peeping round the casement, and filling the room with their evening fragrance. The snowy kerchief crossed so neatly on her dove-gray gown was no whiter than the neck above it, and all truant tresses to-day were

invisible under the tight little cap she wore of black silk.

She related demurely how the finger of the Lord had directed Hugh to be up and doing in His service. The tale of the little Puritan city holding out bravely with small stores and ammunition, and a garrison of but 1,500 men, in order that the disheartened Parliamentarians might have a breathing-space wherein to recruit their damaged ranks, had stirred Hugh to the quick, as it had done hundreds of other youths of his position, and he, too, had been of a sudden inspired to take up arms, and to go forth this time with the rest.

‘He had no leisure, and maybe no heart, to say his farewells to you,’ Mistress Margaret said; ‘but he bade me see that this letter was delivered into the hands of his foster-sister, Mistress Laurel, and so I have brought it myself.’

She drew a cover from her pouch, addressed to Laurel in Hugh’s handwriting.

I sent a servant to summon Laurel, and in a few minutes she entered the room, with a careless, sauntering step, looking tall and goodly in her rich long dress of green and primrose brocade, with velvet slashings, and a fine chain of gold round her well-shaped throat, on either side of which her nut-brown hair hung from a coral comb in dense curls.

Her lute was under her arm, the parrot perched on her wrist, and the spaniels sporting with the edge of her skirts.

Laurel curtsyed with mock profundity to the Puritan maid, and inquired how she did ; but when I said, ' Mistress Margaret has a letter for you from Hugh l'Estrange, who left London yesterday with the train-bands,' she quickly dropped her air of non-chalance, and exclaimed vehemently, as she took the missive from the girl's hand without looking at it :

' 'Tis you who have done this ! 'Tis your work ! I have feared from the first that you would do it—make a rebel of Hugh, and send him forth to draw sword against the King—against the King !'

Aflame with wrath, she towered over the little seated figure in sober gray.

But it did not quail before her. Instead, an answering fire leapt up in Mistress Margaret's serene blue eyes.

' 'Tis not mine, but the work of Him who is above all earthly Kings. Hugh hath but listened to a call from the great Lord of Hosts and of battles. 'Tis for Him and His glory that those brave men at Gloucester will rather starve than yield their city to the enemy, who makes a mock of their plain garb and close-cropped hair and Scripture phrases. Yet, scorned or no, 'tis they whom the Lord has chosen

to be His instrument in turning the tide. The disposition of the stars, my father says, doth show that ere long the fortunes of war will favour the Lord's cause.'

Such a speech from quiet Mistress Margaret Haynes was indeed astonishing. She had risen to her feet as she poured it forth, and the last lingering rays of the setting sun, as they found their way into the dusky room, fell on her fair upturned face, so that it seemed to shine, and was near awesome to look on.

'Tis all cant—cant!' cried Laurel; and the parrot, mightily pleased with a new word so easily mastered, repeated after her, 'Cant! cant! cant!'

'Tis of Silence I am thinking,' Laurel went on, with tears in her voice. 'For myself I care not whether Hugh fights for the rebels, or what he may choose to do. But Silence! Oh, mother, how shall we break it to Silence? She has been counting the hours till next Sunday when Hugh was to come, and he had promised to bring along with him his invention for a dial to show her, and she was so proud at the thought of being allowed to see it. And now he will not come on Sunday—may never come again, withal. And Silence, what will she do without him? Alack, my poor Silence!'

'Poor Silence!' echoed the parrot—'poor Silence!'

I bade Laurel take the parrot out of the room, for I would not have her emotions make her forgetful of the courtesies due to our visitor.

She was glad to escape, for the tears had ascended, methought, by this time from her voice to her eyes, and she did not return till after Mistress Margaret had taken her departure. Then she came back with dry eyes, softly twanging her lute, and singing in snatches, that were half sobs, Mr. Byrd's 'I saw my Lady weeping.'

Michaelmas Day.

Laurel has not confided to me what Hugh's letter contained, but Hugh has writ twice since to Gabriel: first, from the camp on Prestbury Hill, nigh Gloucester, whence he and his comrades saw the Royal forces withdraw from their trenches, fire their huts, and leave the city to its timely succour, for the garrison had but three barrels of gunpowder left; secondly, after the Battle of Newbury, where, on September 14, Lord Essex, finding the road to London barred, drew up his men in fighting array. From Hugh's letter, and from the London news-sheets, we have learned what a hard-fought day that was.

'They so despised us, the train-bands,' Hugh wrote, 'that many of their officers flung off their

doublets in bravado, and did lead their men on in their shirts, saying armour was not needed to deal with base-born apprentices scarce worth the trouble of fighting. Later, methinks, they sang to a different tune.'

'The train-bands of the City of London,' said the news-sheet, 'endured the chiefest heat of the fray, for, being now on the brow of the hill, they lay not only open to the horse, but to the cannon of the enemy. Yet they stood undaunted, and conquerors against all, and, like a grove of pines in a day of wind and tempest, they only moved their heads, but kept their footing sure.'

And in a packet sent to Hart Street my brother Roger tells of how, in this combat, the dreamer, Lord Falkland, lost, or rather gave, his life, for 'tis said he had long set no value on't, his heart not being in the cause for which he had felt bound in honour to fight. He was weary of his country's misery, he was heard to say on that fatal morning, and believed he should be out of it before night. And so he charged more gallantly than advisedly through a gap in the hedge, on t'other side of which the enemy were keeping up a hot fire, and he and his horse fell in the instant dead together.

Lord Falkland had been Secretary to the King since the fight at Edgehill, and 'twas through his

advice that His Majesty sat down before Gloucester, which proved so great an error.

His lordship's body was stripped, trod upon, and mangled, Roger says, and could only be recognised by a mole on the neck. How grievous and tragical are these details of war, and when they concern one we have known and spoken with, they come home to us the more distressfully. I can see now Lord Falkland's dark head, so nobly set on the small, somewhat weakly figure, as it looked when my husband and I dined at Mr. Selden's in Whitefriars, and I have the sound of his slow incisive speech in my ears, as he engaged with so much admirable wit and judgment in the conversation. And to-day that melancholy head lies beneath the sod on the Wiltshire Downs, and the voice is still for ever.

Yet all the painful tidings that come to us in London from the scene of bloodshed and violence do not make the little affairs of our daily life a whit of less importance.

Olave has cut his first tooth, and 'tis amazing how the household both here and in Hart Street hath much rejoiced and wondered over the upgrowth of a tiny pearl in the rosebud of his mouth. 'Tis a common enough miracle, truly, of Nature's working, yet methinks it might never have happened before from the fuss we have made of it. This morning I

was summoned betimes to settle a hot disputation 'twixt chef Alphonse and his rival in the kitchen, as to whether 'the goose of Michaelmas' should be served up with bay-leaves or in sage, and as last year I cast my decision for sage, this year, in fairness, I did grant Alphonse his bays.

The season for herb-pulling and preserving of fruits and rose-leaves is over, but the supervision of nut-pickling and distilling essences keeps me busy. Laurel, since I taught her, has become an apt pupil in these matters, and shows a special skill and cunning for preparing herb-infusions and decoctions of all sorts in the tin vessels of divers shapes and sizes, with and without spouts, ranged for that purpose on the storeroom shelves. Laurel diligently studies the recipe-books, and doth experiment with beautifying washes and pastes, being still ambitious of exchanging the golden-brown tint of her skin for a more ordinary pink and white. I am glad her efforts fail to bring about the transformation when I see her come in, as at this minute, all aglow from gathering posies for the beau-pots, with her cherry hood falling from her brown hair, her silken apron filled with clove-carnations, bachelor's buttons, and other lingering summer glories of the garden; she is verily a picture of rare, rich colour, and no eye that rests on 't could wish it paled.

‘Mother, the swallows are going,’ says she, on her knees by my dragon beau-pots. ‘They are drawn up in black lines along the eaves and above the stonework of Lincoln Inn’s Gateway, ready to start. I bade them carry my loving remembrance to Blois if they go that way. But how can even swallows think of winter to-day?’

How indeed! The sunlight lies warmly aslant the fields, and sets the fanes on the City roofs and towers glistening like the dewdrops on the grass. Not a leaf has dropped from the dark foliage of the trees. Yet in another month we shall have taken the green boughs from the chimneys to make room for the dancing flames.

VII

OXFORD,
April, 1644.

FOR the first time since I possessed it my day-book has accompanied me on a journey, and I have opened it in this low-roofed, panelled chamber of Trinity College, Oxon, where we tarry, having brought my brother Will hither. He left Paul's School at Easter, being deemed by his masters ripe for the University; and his Latin verse and love of Plato and of books and learning in general having ever drawn the affections of Gabriel to Will more than to the rest of my brothers and sisters, he proposed placing him at his own expense under the famous old Dr. Kettle, president of Trinity College, which was my husband's own college in his youth.

This kindness has greatly relieved my father. His music pupils falling away in these troubled times, he is more hard put to it than ever to bring up his family with decent advantages, and could of a cer-

tainty not have afforded out of his small means to send Will to Oxford.

Laurel is with us, Silence being content to let her sister out of her sight for once, and to stay behind at the Gray House with baby Olave, Marie, and Mrs. Miriam. Silence is happier in London, because Hugh came back to it in the autumn with Lord Essex, and whether he be for Roundheads or Cavaliers, 'tis all the same to Silence so long as he is Hugh.

We lay a night at Kingston, the home of some maternal kinswomen of Gabriel's, whither we went by water, and took horse from Kingston to Oxford early on a fair April morning.

At one of the inns by the road on the other side of Windsor, where we stopped for baiting of the horses, we met coming from the inn parlour a young lady with dark eyes and hair, very daintily clad in a silver-laced riding-dress, a long feather sweeping from the brim of her wide gray hat.

'How beautiful!' murmured Laurel as she passed, ever ready to admire beauty when she sees it, in either man or woman.

'Tis Mrs. John Milton—I know 'tis she!' exclaimed Will, in some excitement at his knowledge. 'I have seen her when I went to borrow a Terence from Edward Phillips, Mr. Milton's nephew, at their lodgings in St. Bride's Churchyard.'

‘And what is Mrs. Milton doing at a roadside inn, I wonder, apparently unprotected?’ Gabriel said, but had scarcely spoken the words before the lady re-entered the parlour and took up a position in the window, where she stood drawing her gloves on and off, and twirling her riding-whip with nervous impatience; and at length, as if moved by a sudden impulse, she came to the table where some refreshment had been set before us, and exclaimed in a tuneful voice:

‘Sir, madam, pardon my freedom in throwing myself on your courtesy and compassion. I am bound for my mother’s, Mistress Powell’s, house, near the camp without Oxford, but have reasons to mistrust my hired escort. May I, therefore, if you are travelling in the same direction, crave your company by the way?’

Thus we took under our wing Mr. Milton’s runaway wife, for with great frankness she chattered to us of what she was pleased to call her ‘ill-matched union’ with the poet, as we rid along together ’twixt the hawthorn hedges and meadows, silvered o’er with ladysmocks. In her Oxfordshire home at Shotover, said she, they had been a lively party. Cavaliers came and went, and she had been used to dancing and all kinds of merriments. The change to the studious Puritan household, in narrow

lodgings in St. Bride's Churchyard, where no one visited her, gave her the mopes, and, as for the ringing of the church bells, and the cries of her husband's pupils when they were whipped, 'twas enough, she vowed, to drive her crazed.

'If I had suffered such a life much longer, I should have ended in Bedlam,' she said. 'I prayed humbly for leave to visit my relations, but 'twas not granted; so, you see, I have taken French leave.'

Methought she talked too lightly of so grave a step, and I told her so; but she did not take it ill, only laughed and chattered the more.

When we neared Oxford, and its gray spires and towers rose before us out of the green, flat country against the clear, pearly sky of late afternoon, Mrs. Milton hailed a friend in a young officer riding slowly up to the cross-roads at the head of a troop of horse, which, from the dust and flecks of blood on the rider's clothes, appeared to have been lately engaged in a skirmish.

'Captain Gardiner!' cried the lady; ' 'tis really you! Then I need not bring my new friends out of their way to see me safely to Forest Hill.'

'I and my troopers are at your service, madam,' answered the young officer, bowing gracefully over his saddle. 'I am bound myself for Mistress

Powell's, where 'tis my excellent good fortune to be quartered this night.'

So our fellow-traveller parted from us, with many pretty words of thanks for the protection our companionship had afforded her. She galloped gaily away with the Cavalier officer, his love-locks floating on the air beside her dark curls and plume. Before they disappeared in a bend of the road, she turned and waved to us with her whip.

How had Mr. Milton come to woo so volatile a creature, thought I. Though 'tis easy to understand the eye of the poet who writ such beauties as 'Il Penseroso' and 'Lycidas' being charmed by her loveliness and elegance, one can but wonder how the grave writer of Puritan tracts on Church government and other serious matters, the stern task-master who doth whip his nephews into learning their Greek, could suppose that any happiness was to come of wedding with a butterfly, and pinning it down in a cramped lodging.

Oxford is full to overflowing with all sorts and conditions of men. 'Tis a pleasure to my husband to show us the ancient colleges and halls, whose gorgeous services of plate have nearly all been melted down to meet the King's necessities. There are numberless fine pictures and painted glass windows to be seen in the chapels, and music to be

heard that is a joy to the ear and an exaltation to the soul. The science of music is held in high esteem here, and the most antique kind is zealously studied and performed. Sir Oracle is acquainted with the leading men of learning and science, and has much to do during our short stay in going from college to college to visit them. Many resemble him in being too moderate to attach themselves violently to one party or the other, and hover 'twixt the two. They discourse on Socinianism, Erastianism, Metaphysics, and Alchemy, as if war were not, as it needs must be, the absorbing interest of the hour.

The presence of the Court and the garrison give this seat of learning a curiously unwonted aspect, Gabriel says. Soldiers swarm in the streets, and are billeted over the college gates. The beautiful gardens and groves are filled with ladies and courtiers in these fair spring days. The Grove of Trinity, dubbed Daphne by the wits, is specially favoured, whereat the president, Dr. Kettle, is not best pleased. There, last summer, the Lady Isabella Thynne, brightest star of the Court, would stroll, habited in a scanty, fantastic garb, said to be cut after the pattern of that worn by the angels. Perfumes and strains of soft music accompanied her, supplied by her page and singing-boy, who played the theorbo before her. Anne Harrison, now lodged

with her sister and father in this college instead of over the baker's, seems to have been much in the Lady Isabella's society, and has a great deal to tell me of the escapades she has led her into. 'A merry heart goes all the way,' and despite poverty and the sad sights and events of war, one affecting her so nearly as the death of her brother, William Harrison, who was killed by a fall from his horse in a skirmish at the end of last year, Anne has kept a merry heart, or, as she expresses it, been merry on the top of cares. Anne is to be married in May to Mr. Richard Fanshawe, a gentleman of distant kinship with her mother's family, whom she had not met till she came to Oxford. Mr. Fanshawe has been sworn Secretary of War to the Prince of Wales, and, like Anne's father, is ready for any risk or sacrifice in the King's service.

I have not seen Mr. Fanshawe yet, but Anne recounted his virtues and perfections to me this morning as she sat in her old favourite attitude on the floor, with her bright head leaning against my lap, whilst Gabriel and Laurel were gone with Will to hear the psalms sung in the chapel.

'So the fairy prince, or Apollo—which is it?—hath revealed himself,' said I, remembering Anne's words when she had discovered my day-book, and vowed she would keep a journal, too, and then, on second

thoughts, had said she would wait till she was wed.

‘He is not exactly one or t’other,’ she answered, ‘but better than either, and his match is not to be found. I will prepare you for the sight of him, so listen: He is of the highest height of men, strong, and of the best proportion, his skin exceeding fair, his hair brown and very curling, but not long; and methinks in this respect he must please our crusty Dr. Kettle, who doth so hate long hair and periwigs that he hides scissors in his muff, wherewith to shear the scholars in his house. So tell your Will to look to his love-locks, if he has any, or the doctor will certainly snip them. I go in mighty dread of that venerable personage, since my Lady Isabella, for a frolic, induced me to call on him once in her company to play off a trick on his worthiness. But I forgot what the trick was when, in the terrible voice and manner that he uses to scold the idle young boys of his college, he addressed himself to me, saying he had bred up my father here, and knew my grandfather, and held me for a gentlewoman, and “would I be gone?” I shook in my shoes, I must confess.’

‘But ’twas of your future husband you were talking, not of the president,’ I reminded her; and she went on to say that she was indeed proud and

happy to be Dick Fanshawe's choice, and what more did I want to know than that he was the most desirable gentleman in the world?

'We may truly be called merchant adventurers,' she did add, 'for the stock we are to set up our trading with will not amount to £20 betwixt us, my promised portion and Dick's fortune being both in expectation. But so long as he can buy pen, ink, and paper, what does it matter? To be poor is the fashion.

“We do not suffer here alone ;
Though we are beggared, so's the King.
'Tis sin to have wealth when he has none :
Since poverty's a royal thing.”

Hark ! I hear the president's step, surely. One can always know he's coming, for he drags one foot with a scraping noise. Young Mr. Egerton mimics it to the life. Nay, where can I hide myself from his awesome presence ?

But Anne showed no disposition to hide herself when the doctor, returning from chapel, came in with Laurel and Gabriel. Instead, she drew herself erect, looking dazzling fair in the mourning she still wears for her brother, her small hands toying with a branch of almond blossom she had plucked from the Grove. The ruddy doctor, gigantic and imposing in his surplice and hood, gave her a sharp look over his

spectacles, then smiled on her benignly, as much as to say he had taught her a lesson once and had no wish to repeat it.

Anne soon made an excuse to carry Laurel off to the apartments allotted to her and her sister Margaret in another wing of the college.

Dr. Kettle then began to report to us favourably on Will's Greek, and of his singing of the Gospel for the day in the Hall.

'He promises well,' Dr. Kettle said in his squeaking voice, which is so comically out of proportion to the bulk of his form. 'Let us hope he won't cast off his gown and run away with the soldiers to the next battle. These civil wars are proving the devastation of scholarship. They will shorten my life, I trow, which you will believe when I tell you that a rude foot-soldier marched impudently to my desk when I was giving my rhetoric lecture the other day and broke my hour-glass. What are we coming to? what are we coming to?'

Gabriel told me when he was gone that the good doctor carried his hour-glass wherever he went—into the pulpit and the lecture-room, and even on the back of his bay gelding, when he rid behind his man to his parsonage at Garstington—and had threatened the youths once that if they did not do their exercises better he would bring an hour-glass two hours long.

TRINITY COLLEGE, OXON,

May Day.

The Maypoles have not been cut down here as in Puritan London, and the revels began betimes in front of the Mitre tavern this morning. The May Queen was crowned in Christ Church meadows, and carried in a procession of hawthorn-decked maidens and swains to the sound of flute and tabor the round of the colleges.

In the afternoon the real Queen went in state to a performance by the King's players of Captain Lovelace's 'Scholar' at Gloucester Hall, which comedy has not been seen since the King's visit to Oxford in 1636, when the poet, then a student of Gloucester Hall, was made a Master of Arts.

To the play we were cavaliered by my brother Roger, who is quartered over the gate at Merton. After Edgehill fight, to which he went on foot, Roger managed to equip himself with armour, a horse and servants, and to get his commission as a lieutenant of dragoons. But he would have me believe that his distinguished gallantry in the last action he engaged in deserves a captaincy, and he wants me to prevail with Gabriel to lend him a sum of money, which makes me fear he may be run into debt.

Roger seems to know, and be known to, divers

people in Oxford, and pointed out several notabilities to me and Laurel to-day in the great crowd that thronged Magdalen Walk after the play. He, too, like Anne Harrison, talks of the gay doings here of last summer—the King's summer of successes in the war : of the interludes and masques played by ladies and gentlemen of the Court in the college gardens ; of parties taking boat on the sunny river to Fair Rosamond's Bower ; of nights given up to dancing, music, and song ; and of those gallants who, taking part in the festivities and revelry one day, might the next be lying dead in some blood-stained grassy lane or dell, slain in beating up the enemy without the town.

' 'Tis a pity you didn't bring Will to college then,' said Roger, ' for things were livelier than they are now. The King has taken alarm at the news that Lord Essex has recruited his army and designs to swoop down on Oxford one of these fine days and capture His Majesty's person. The Queen is with child again, and has lost her sprightliness, and talks of going to Exeter. Didst notice she scarce smiled once through the comedy ? Here are Prince Rupert and Prince Maurice, a pair of giants, and mightily devoted brothers they are. The Prince hath lost favour with the Queen, despite his most heroic relief of Newark in March, and hath enemies plotting

against him at Court. Do you know why 'tis sparkish to wear a lace cravat? Because His Highness, a-horseback in the early morning, once found the air chilly, and tied his lace handkerchief about his throat, and, it being becoming, all the mimics did likewise. Among the Prince's detractors is not to be counted gallant Governor Legge, coming hither. He doth worship the ground the Prince treads on. I was serving under Colonel Will Legge t'other day when he charged the Puritans on the bridge at Thame and beat them off it three times, the third time for good. See, yonder comes the author of the play, Captain Lovelace. Why, Mistress Laurel, you are outblushing the deepest damask rose as ever I saw!

'Twas true that Laurel changed colour as Captain Lovelace, whom we had not seen again in London since the summer in which we made his acquaintance, passed, doffing his hat with a sweet, grave smile of recognition.

But Roger's remarking on her blushes in so outspoken and familiar a fashion changed the look of amusement with which Laurel had been listening to his gossip into an angry frown. Yet by the evening she had forgiven Roger enough to engage with him in a prank, which, if I had known aught of it, I should of a certainty not have countenanced.

Gabriel had come back to our college chambers from a blissful afternoon passed amidst the manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, accompanied by Mr. Fanshawe, who is as great a devotee of poetry and the Muses as my husband. Mr. Fanshawe had with him the little copy of Sir John Denham's 'Cooper's Hill,' which had been published in Oxford soon after the Battle of Edgehill, printed on curious brown paper, as there was no other to be had. Gabriel and Mr. Fanshawe read aloud from it in turns, and I listened, unconcerned at Laurel's absence, as I had entrusted her to Roger's care, to show her the buildings of Oxford by moonlight, the May night being so fair and radiant. Now, it chanced, as Laurel told me later, that she and Roger, starting on their promenade, did encounter an old beggar minstrel, very decrepit and ragged, playing on some four-stringed instrument so feebly that few heeded him or threw him a coin. 'I with my guitar, and you with your voice,' said Roger, seeing the gaze of pity Laurel cast on him, 'could quickly fill that old man's hat with money;' and he forthwith proposed that they two should disguise themselves in humble habits and lead the old man betwixt them, to make music boldly on the quadrangle at Christ Church before their Majesties' windows.

Laurel, methinks, was ready enough for the freak,

and let herself be enveloped by a peddling woman of Roger's acquaintance in a wide hooded cloak, green from shabbiness, and a rustic cotton bonnet, that shaded her face from inquisitive inquiry. Roger, with the aid of another voluminous cloak, a slouch hat drawn over his eyes, and a few deft applications of burnt cork and paint-brush to his face and hands, had succeeded in looking as much the strolling musician as their ancient companion.

We have Roger's word for it that Laurel sang as she had never sung before. Secure in her disguise, she felt no shyness at bringing even the King from the card-table to the open window, and hearing the Queen's exclamations in French of wonder and delight.

How were it possible, Her Majesty had asked, for one singing in the streets, and so exposed to all weathers, to retain such adorable freshness of voice, such exquisitely clear and bell-like notes?

'Perchance she is new to her work,' someone had hazarded.

'But not new to her art,' said another; 'the mastery of the voice is more wondrous than the voice itself.'

'The spirit of the Maytime was in't when she sang that gay roundel, and the pathos of tragedy in the ballad of long ago.'

‘Singing of this kind is too good for village fairs and country weddings. ’Tis worthy to be heard at Courts.’

‘So pure an accent in French as hers, believe me, was never heard at an English fair,’ the Queen had declared when Laurel had trilled forth :

‘Le temps s’en va ; le temps s’en va, madame.
Hélas, le temps non, mais nous en allons.’

And not compliments alone were rained upon the wandering musicians, but a shower of silver pieces, the courtiers flinging all their winnings of the evening at cards from the windows. But Captain Lovelace must have been losing, not winning, for after the others had thrown their coins, he had but tossed a flower at Laurel’s feet.

‘And the flower,’ explained Roger, relating his share of the tale, ‘is the only wage our lady nightingale accepted for her song. The rest was poured into the aged minstrel’s hat—a fortune for him indeed.’

‘The old minstrel was grateful, I trust,’ said I.

Roger would have said ‘Yes,’ and ended there ; but Laurel, always frank and open as the day, had more to tell.

‘Beneath the lanthorns of All Souls’ Gateway,’ she said, ‘he was parting from us, calling down blessings on our heads in the same quavering voice

with which he had first addressed us, when a passer-by, looking hard at him, drew near and rudely twitched his hair and beard, and hissed in his ear, "Jesuit dog, sneaking agent of the Papists, what game are you playing at in this guise?" then walked on. The minstrel's hair was a wig, his beard false. He quickly arranged both again; but, mother, I had seen by the light of the lanthorns that the colour of his own hair was red, and the mouth beneath the false beard was that of the man we saw playing a match at bowls with Sir John Suckling in Spring Garden. He made no further pretence of being the old musician, but dropped the rôle at once, and said in his natural voice: "Do not be disgusted to find your charity hath been misplaced. I assure you that you have done a greater service than you thought for, for, instead of succouring an old buffoon in want, you have served the King."

'And if 'tis true,' Laurel went on, with kindling eyes—'if I have, maybe, really done the King some unconscious service in this manner, as the Lady d'Aubigny did when she took the King's commission of array to London without knowing what 'twas, then I repent nothing of the evening's masquerade. I would act it all over again, even at the risk of incurring yours and my father's displeasure. To serve the King! How glorious to serve the King!' she repeated, fastening

in her bosom Captain Lovelace's flower, which was a fritillary, a fair water-blossom, such as grows along the banks of the river here in May and June.

'Oh, you should have been there and seen the King to-night! 'Twas like a dream to stand singing beneath the starry sky with the shadows of turrets and pinnacles lying on the sward, all silver in the moonbeams. And the King, the King stepped through the window on to the flags to listen, with the brightness of a hundred tapers behind him shining on jewels and rich colours. But he was in white, all white except the blue riband of his George, and his face was like ivory, and looked very sad, even when he smiled. Ay, I wish you had been there, mother.'

'Yes, Lovejoy, you should have been there to hear the piercing anguish Laurel put into the refrain, "But think not ye my heart was sair"; and to see the effect it wrought on the ladies and gentlemen of the Court,' Roger said, his jaunty air and self-assurance being in no wise abated by mine and Gabriel's strongly expressed disapproval of his escapade with Laurel. I have wondered whether Roger was in the secret of the minstrel's disguise, and whether he knew of the red hair beneath the gray wig; if so, his conduct would be all the more blameworthy, methinks.

May 18.

We have stayed longer in Oxford than we first intended, to be present at Anne Harrison's wedding, which took place this forenoon in the little country church at Wolvercott, two miles away. 'Twas Anne's express desire that her cousin Young and I, the old and true friend of her girlhood, should see her wed, and Laurel, too, of whom she is very fond. Sir John Harrison sent out no favours, wishing his daughter's wedding in these times to be a quiet one, and the only guests beside ourselves in the church were Sir Edward Hyde and the King's Attorney, Sir Geoffrey Palmer.

Anne should be a lucky bride, for the golden sunbeams seemed to delight to dance on her as she stood at the altar in her pearl-embroidered bridal kirtle and overdress of lavender taffeta, the gems shining in her hair. Her tall father gave her to her still taller husband, and she was married with her mother's wedding-ring.

The laylocks were in bloom in the village gardens, the orchards white with snowy blossom, and the young lambs frisking in the fields. Yet even in this scene of idyllic peacefulness we could not long forget the alarums of war, for the bridal party, coming from the church, had to wait to let a company of foot

march by. We watched them over the churchyard wall, and the captain of the company, being acquainted with Sir John Harrison, ordered a volley to be fired in compliment to the bride. It happened that one of the muskets was loaded, and a brace of bullets passed two inches above her head and buried themselves in the cedar under whose shade Anne was standing to look at the soldiers. The happy smile died on her lips in that moment of averted danger, and I think we all echoed very fervently in our hearts the 'Thank God!' of her husband at so narrow and merciful an escape.

This is the last time I shall write my journal in Oxford. There is great uneasiness in the town, and some people fear Lord Essex and Sir William Waller may carry out their design of marching from London to invest it. The Queen has fled to Exeter, and discontent and jealousy prevail. The Protestant friends of the King are suspicious of the number of Papists that he suffers to hang about here, and money is scarce, and means of raising it scarcer.

Welladay! At dawn to-morrow we shall have said our farewells to these spires and towers and gardens, and be on the road to Windsor. May God prosper our journey, and bring me safely home to my little Olave, whom my arms ache to hold again.

VIII

CHANCERY LANE,
January, 1645.

ANOTHER summer and autumn have passed, and the country is still at war. The great battle of Marston Moor, in Yorkshire, was fought in July, and proved unexpectedly a victory for the rebel armies of English and Scots; but in Cornwall, where both my brother Roger and Hugh L'Estrange were engaged on different sites, Lord Essex was badly beat. The King builds great hopes on the Queen, who is in France, sending him foreign aid, and on help from the Marquis of Montrose and his Highlanders; he would also suffer to be sent troops from Ireland over here to fight for him—a step the very contemplation of which some who are most loyal and devoted to his service do strongly disapprove.

Since Mr. Pym died and was buried with great honour in Westminster Abbey, bitter dissensions have arisen in the enemy's camp 'twixt the Presbyterians and the Independents. To the last-named

faction belongs the firebrand General Oliver Cromwell, who, Sir Oracle says, is a tower of strength in the ranks of the King's foes, and has been heard to say that if he met His Majesty in combat he would as soon shoot a pistol in his face as in another's.

'Tis maybe because the winter days are short and the evenings long that mine is becoming a winter more than a summer journal. This is the fourth January that I have writ in it, and 'tis four years since I married and left my old home in Hart Street. If I have not filled some of these blank pages with the ups and downs of the family life there under Peg's management, 'tis because the record would have been too trivial belike. Peg's reign will soon be over, for she is bent on making a match with a young apothecary in Aldersgate, who has long wooed her, and whom she hath always intended to fall back on, she candidly confesses, if the flaxen-haired gallant foretold for her long ago at Bartholomew Fair did not make his appearance in reasonable time. 'Twas with some reluctance that Peg renounced her romantic dreams and arrived at her present prosaic conclusion that portionless maids like Prue and herself cannot be choosers, because, as a rule, they have no choice, and if they would fain be wed must take what they can get.

' Even you, Lovejoy, pink of perfection that you

were, had but one suitor whom we ever knew of, and he was your husband. That he was a gentleman of position and fortune to boot was a piece of luck ; 'tis not likely 'twill be repeated in our case. 'Tis the Laurels of this life who can afford to say first they will and then they won't to a score or more of lovers.'

Peg sighed as she delivered herself of this worldly wisdom, and then proceeded to dust with vehemence the harpsichon and the piles of music-books that have increased in number and raggedness in the buff wainscotted parlour since my day.

I was seated by the hearth in my old place watching Jane and Jack at play with their nephew, my little Viking, Olave. I had brought him to spend the day with his uncle and aunt, who are mightily proud of Olave, and never weary of amusing him. They were building castles of toy-bricks on the floor, which 'twas Olave's joy to demolish so soon as the last stone was put on. He revelled in the ruin wrought by his fat hands, and Jane and Jack joined in his ecstasies of mirth when the tall towers shook to their carpet foundations and toppled over with a crash.

My father, coming in with a sheet of music for Prue to copy, hurried and preoccupied as usual, his dear face pale and careworn, heard Olave shout with glee :

‘I knocked it down! I knocked it down!
Huzzah!’

‘The Puritan vandals would find the little man after their own hearts,’ said he. ‘’Tis their brag and boast that they knock things down. Since they began by chipping in pieces the St. Paul’s and Cheap Crosses, their work of defacement and destruction hath been going apace merrily. ’Tis a marvel that we have escaped so long, but methinks our hour must be near now. A new impetus hath been given to the pillaging and sacking of churches by the Parliament’s last formal abolition of the liturgy yesterday, and the establishing of a new form of plain worship without music by the so-called divines at Westminster. There will soon not be an organ left undestroyed in London, and my vocation will be gone.’

That his augury would, on the instant, be shown to be well founded, my father could not have known, but so it was. The words were scarce out of his mouth before a violent rapping on the street-door was followed by the rude entry of some armed persons, who demanded to see the organist of St. Olave’s. They pushed by Penelope, and came in upon us in the parlour. On my father inquiring their business, one answered :

‘We are officers of the law, and the law now ordains that yonder steeple-house shall be cleared of

idols and mummery. The psalms shall be sung without the grunts and groans of the organ-pipes. If you are, as we believe, one of the retainers of the Church whose function it has been to assist at such profane vanities, we advise you to find some employment less offensive to the Lord. My men have a warrant to cut your braying instrument in ribbons ere night.'

'Sirs!' said my poor father in anguish at the sentence passed on the organ so beloved by him, and of which he was as tender and solicitous as of a creature of flesh and blood, 'yours is an odd manner of advancing religion. At what time may we expect this outrage on a sacred place to be committed?'

'So soon as the neighbouring edifice of All Hallows has been cleared of idolatrous images. You come next on the list,' was the answer. 'All your choral books are to be burnt, so collect them if you like, and save us the trouble.'

The man's eye was caught by the title of the music that lay open on the harpsichon. He laid rough hands on it, and read aloud in a sneering, nasal twang:

'Psalms, Songs, and Sonnets of Sadness and Piety made into Music of Five Parts by William Byrd, one of the gents of the Queen Majesty's Honourable Chapel.'

In his ignorance the man did not know that Dr. Byrd lived in Queen Elizabeth's reign, and thought the Queen was her present Majesty, whom he proceeded to denounce in unmeasured language, working himself up into a frenzy; so that he tore page after page from the music-book, and ended by trampling on the cover as he left the room with his companions.

Little Olave, much affrighted by the intruders' angry voices and scowling faces, had flown into my lap aweeping, whilst Jane and Jack clenched their fists as with a desire to pummel them well. Peg and Prue, old Penelope, and the cook-maid drew round my father in tearful distress, and even Tim, who hath entered on his apprenticeship this Christmas, was indignant, and vowed he would borrow a musket and station himself at the church door.

'Come, children,' said my father, 'we will all go across to the church. By this time the choristers will be there to practise the anthem; and so let us take a last reverent farewell of the friend that from your tender infancy hath helped you all to praise your Creator in the most noble services of song and harmony appointed by the Church.'

I rose at once with Olave in my arms, and walked beside my father bareheaded from the house into the bleak outer air, the others following us. A bitter

blast swept from the river along Crutched Friars, and met our faces as we took the paved path through the churchyard beneath the leafless trees.

Along this path how often as a tiny child I skipped at my father's side on weekdays, ever delighting to be with him when he went to the organ; and on Sundays I came demurely, holding my mother's hand, and afterwards when she died 'twas my turn to lead the younger ones to church and to teach them their Prayer-Book, and to behave themselves with reverence.

St. Olave's is for me sanctified by a thousand memories, besides those of my first meeting with my husband and my bridal, and to me and my brothers and sisters it must always be the church of all churches. Each of us has grown up to love with a sense of personal possession the brasses, tablets, and marble tombs with their carved canopies and Corinthian pillars. Other churches, such as Great St. Helen's, may have finer, but these are dearest to us because the first we knew.

Sunday after Sunday have I watched the sunlight coming through the rich colours of the stained-glass windows play on the two stone figures of the worthy aldermen Andrew and Paul Bayning, kneeling there so dignified and composed in their ruffs and chains. And when 'twas hot and the sermon long, to keep

my drowsy lids from falling I have oft spelt out to myself and puzzled over the quaint words on John Orgone the woollen-draper's brass :

'As I was, so be ye ;
As I am you shall be ;
That I gave, that I have ;
That I spent, that I had.
Thus I end all my cost ;
That I have, that I lost.'

All of us in our childhood had our own chosen favourite among the monuments. Jane and Jack have followed my example, and love most the brothers Bayning. Peg and Prue's special fondness was for Sir James Deane, on his knees above the vestry door with his heraldic bearings and his three wives ; the two who died before him holding skulls in their hands, the poor babes that had not outlived their chrisom robes lying swaddled at their feet. The Florentine gentleman sculptured in alabaster, beneath a fair canopy in a kneeling attitude with folded hands, is the best-beloved of Will and Tim.

Anne Harrison used to say she preferred her namesake, the Dame Anne Radcliffe, with her wimple and long robes, praying so calmly in profile at a desk in a niche on the south side of the altar.

I thought of Anne to-day as we passed into the church on the sad errand of listening to the doomed organ for the last time, of how regularly on Sundays

and holy-days through the winter months she had come with that sweet pious lady, her mother, to the Lord Dingwall's pew, and taken part in the services with a seriousness of which one could scarce have thought so restless and merry a maid capable. In St. Olave's, too, worshipped her godmothers, the Lady Alston and the Lady Wolstenholm, who came to church in much magnificence, their blackamoors bearing their essence bottles and Prayer-Books with jewelled clasps. And when the congregation poured out into the graveyard Anne always bounded up to tell me all that had happened since I saw her, which may have been but the day before, and stoop to kiss Jane and Jack. Now no one has to stoop far to kiss Jack, he is so grown, and he thinks himself too big a man to be kissed at all. But he hath still a cherubic look in his white surplice as he sings in the choir. Did I say 'sings'? There is no choir now, and strange that I should forget and speak in the present instead of the past tense, after the events of this day.

On entering the church we found that our Vicar had gathered the choristers together, and prepared them for what was coming. He, too, has fallen on evil days, for he hath been ejected from his cure, and some fanatical, sectarian Brownist or Anabaptist (I know not one from t'other) licensed instead to lecture from his pulpit. With us for congregation the Vicar,

surpliced and hooded, read the prayers, and then my father struck up the anthem, and Dr. John Bull's mellow harmonies pealed forth and flooded the aisles, and echoed in the arches of the timbered roof. It may have been fancy, but never before had the organ seemed to stir the soul and touch the heart as now, never had the silvery voices of the boys sounded purer and more divine.

The Amen had hardly died away when the band of destroyers burst into the choir from the vestry door. My father's hand still lingered on the organ keys, and he bowed his head over them without moving from his stool. But 'twas the work of a moment for the leader of the desecrating party, a tall fellow who had the appearance of being a blacksmith, with a heavy jaw and mighty length and strength of arm, to take my father by the shoulders and push him out of his way. Then they fell on the organ furiously, battering its pipes with crowbars and ripping the bellows with their swords. They laughed that frightful, mirthless, Puritanical laugh which methinks is the only merriment their creed permits, at our beloved organ's expiring groans that so wrung our hearts that we cried for it as bitterly as for a human creature in agony. The massacre was soon accomplished, and they next went to ransack the vestry for choral books, and despoiled the choir-desks.

But when they thought by way of finishing to use their hammers on the tombs, they met with opposition. Up leaped Jack and Jane, their eyes ablaze, one brandishing a broom and the other a poker, and mounted guard in front of the figures of the brothers Bayning; and in the chancel the choristers had likewise armed themselves with the same sort of weapons, and stood on the defensive before the altar and Lady Anne Radcliffe.

Whether 'twas the sharp blows from broomsticks gotten in their faces when they approached the tombs, I cannot say, but the Puritans agreed that there was other work on hand in the way of organ-wrecking that was more urgent than chipping the noses from St. Olave's idolatrous images, as they were pleased to express it, and so they withdrew with their hammers and chisels, leaving us to bemoan the ruin they left behind them.

'Wicked, naughty men!' whispered little Olave, who had watched the scene of vandalism with big, wondering blue eyes. 'Naughty men to talk and fight in church!'

I thank God that my boy is too young to carry the memory of what he has seen to-day into manhood. My father, whose footstep had been brave and firm when we had come across to the church, tottered as we went out again into the chill dusk



DESTRUCTION OF THE ORGAN OF ST. OLAVE'S.

of the winter's afternoon, and he took my arm for support.

I gave Olave over to his aunts and led my poor crushed father to his study, where, after bidding Penelope bring him a hot herb posset, I devoted myself as best I could to his consolation.

'What is to be done, child?' said he. 'What new trade can I learn at my age now that music is taken from me?'

'There are the pupils,' said I.

'The pupils have fallen away. I can boast but two for the coming year, and one was for the organ. Nay, I cannot make a living out of a single pupil. 'Tis well thou art comfortably established with so liberal and honest a gentleman for your husband; and Peg has her apothecary: the sooner they wed the better. Would that I could foresee as good a provision for Prue.'

'But, father,' I exclaimed, 'you need that Prue should stay to take care of you. Jane is too young. I will consult Gabriel. Gabriel will help you, father, belike to some post at Oxford, for Oxford is the refuge of musicians now, as 'tis of Royalists.'

'You must take care, child, not to burden thy husband's shoulders too heavily with our troubles. Remember, when he married thee he did not marry all.'

He smiled faintly, and then sank wearily back in his chair.

I noticed that his black taffeta coat was dusty, and the lace bands were ragged; not from age, for I had given him new ones but a short time since, but from want of careful mending and washing. Peg methought was to blame for this and the neglect of other small duties which contribute to keep up the appearances and comfort of a household; maybe the prospect of having a house of her own has of late put these things out of Peg's head. 'Twas sad to leave my father in so deep a dejection of spirits, and I promised them I would return to Hart Street to-morrow early, to see how he fared.

As I rid back to Chancery Lane with Olave in the hackney-coach which Juan called for me, the news was being cried abroad in the streets that the Archbishop, who hath languished a prisoner these four years in the Tower, was to suffer death on the morrow. During his lengthy trial, which began in the autumn, the old man has been dragged forth from his cell daily to Westminster, and hath argued in his own defence with unflagging courage. But on January 3 the Lords passed the Bill of Attainder against him, and he began to prepare for death. His petition to be beheaded instead of hung has been granted. He will have thus lived just long enough

to know of the abandoning of the Book of Liturgy by law, the liturgy that at the beginning of these troubles he would fain have thrust upon the Scots.

January 10.

This morning, on coming to Hart Street with Laurel, early as 'twas, a visitor had been admitted before us.

'Mistress Travers is in the study with father making her condolences,' Peg announced with much calmness, considering what a bugbear the very name of the widow had once been.

'Tis such months, nay, years since she hath darkened our doors,' explained Prue. 'Her appearance took us quite unawares, and all our old weapons of defence were rusty. She walked in, and there she is purring and cooing, as if there had never been the least estrangement 'twixt us.'

'Tis well Jack was gone to school, or she would have kissed him for certain as she was wont to do,' said Jane, 'and wouldn't he have been angry!'

At this moment Mistress Travers rustled forth from the study into the parlour, took me in her ample embrace, which astonished me not a little, as I have never invited her to Chancery Lane, and heaped flatteries on my stepdaughter, declaring that she had not known her to possess such striking beauty.

‘I fear your poor dear father feels sorely the proceedings of yesterday,’ she went on. ‘’Tis unfortunate that such doings should be deemed necessary. I have been telling him that my chamber-organ is at his disposal for his lessons if he wills. I cannot see, for my part, how music interferes with patriotism and the cause of public liberty, which from tradition I uphold—as is but natural, my great-grandfather having been Lord Mayor. Mr. Milton, in his plea for unlicensed printing—and I suppose you have all read it—has something to say about music, which shows he sees no sinfulness in singing and the playing of instruments, for does he not speak of the airs and madrigals that whisper softness in chambers?’

She has a way of putting her head inquiringly from side to side as she talks, which makes one think of a sparrow twittering. As for her great-grandfather, who was once Lord Mayor of London, Mistress Travers was ever prone to bring him into her converse by hook or by crook, though of old ’twas not in connection with such high-sounding phrases as patriotism and the cause of public liberty.

‘Mr. Milton, to whom ’twould seem you pin your faith, madam,’ said I, ‘must indeed find it difficult to countenance the scenes of desecration going on at present in the churches, authorized by the party for

whom he wields his pen, unless he hath forgot that he ever writ :

“ There let the pealing organ blow
To the full-voiced quire below,
In service high, and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through my ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies.”

‘ How sweetly you quote those lines !’ said Mistress Travers, with her eternal smile of sugar. ‘ Dear Mrs. Lovejoy, if we cannot think alike, at least we need not quarrel.’

‘ I hope, madam, I have shown no disposition to be quarrelsome,’ I answered with stiffness ; yet feeling somehow that the widow had gained ground to-day, which she would not readily let slip from beneath her feet.

She even had the daring to chuck Prue under the chin, and inquire archly when she intended to follow Peg’s example. Prue flushed angrily, and said she did not understand her meaning, but Peg looked pleased on madam continuing that she knew her lover, Master Bagshaw, by repute.

‘ I hear that he is very free from that fashionable vice of being a good fellow,’ she said. ‘ Doubtless richer are to be had, but a civiller, soberer man hardly to be found.’

‘ If nothing more is to be said in his favour than

that,' Prue said, with a toss of her head, 'I am not envious to stand in Peg's shoes. To my taste civility and sobriety are but commonplace virtues.'

'Prue, Prue! I see you are the same pert little mischief as ever,' Mistress Travers made answer, determined not to take pet at anything to-day. Then she remarked on Jane's rapid growth, and added in a whisper quite loud enough for Jane to hear, 'And she promises to be the handsomest of a handsome family.'

'I hate flattery,' Jane said, and twitched herself away from the widow's caressing hand.

'Welladay! I must be flying home,' said the portly lady, rising at length from the settle by the hearth. 'I will send a servant over with a bottle of old Canary wine for your dear father's heartening and comfort. 'Twas bottled during the mayoralty of my great-grandfather, so I need not say 'tis of the best.'

'Was her great-grandfather Lord Mayor before Sir Richard Whittington, or after, I wonder?' Prue said, when she was really gone.

'Prue, Prue! I see you are the same pert little mischief as ever!' cried Jane, shaking her finger at Prue, and mimicking to the life Mistress Travers' soft voice and wheedling air.

At this point my father came in, his mien very sad and grave. Laurel ran to him, and, taking his hand, exclaimed :

‘Dear master, I know not how to express my grief for you, and indignation at the work of those sanctionious villains. Oh, that they could be punished as they deserve!’

‘Ah, sweet Mistress Laurel, they can wreck organs, but they are powerless to lay rude hands on that choicest instrument of God’s making, the human voice; so they cannot deprive me of the guardianship of yours.’

‘But what can my voice be to you compared with the mighty grandeur and majesty of the organ’s? It requires no stops and pedals; you cannot play on’t. And you have taught me so well to control it, though methinks I require many more lessons.’

‘Rather should you say, that you have learned so well you need no more instruction. ’Tis true enow I have no more to teach you, yet that doth not take from my delight in hearing you sing.’ Still holding Laurel’s hand, my father turned to us. ‘I trust,’ said he, ‘you all showed good Mistress Travers courteous civility. Whatever her faults may be, she means well, and ’twas kind of her to come to us in the time of perplexity and trouble.’ Then, glancing at the timepiece on the chimney, my father added: ‘’Tis twelve of the clock. The hour my Lord Archbishop pays the penalty at the block of his loyalty

to Church and King. Come, let us ascend to the wooden gallery and look out towards Tower Hill.'

As near five years before we had gone to stand there in the May sunshine to see the vast crowd flocking from the execution of Lord Strafford, so now we stood in the bleak winter air beneath a leaden sky on the little balcony at the top of the house, and beheld a yet vaster crowd surging like a sea around the little island of the scaffold, that we could just discern. Every street near and every window casement was black with people. Silently we gazed, well able to picture, though we were too far off to see, how the short stout figure of Archbishop Laud faced that mob tumbling and jostling so close on his feet that, as we were afterwards told, they hardly gave him space enough whereon to kneel to say his last prayers. The street below was so quiet and deserted that no noise came 'twixt us and the murmuring roar sent up by the people, which told the axe had fallen. Slowly the crowds began moving in all directions like long lines of ants, and my father, with a sob and his hands before his face, went back into the house.

February.

Hugh l'Estrange was with us on Sunday, and Silence deserted Olave and the nursery. Hugh's train-band belonging to the 'Yellow Regiment' is

to serve still in the remodelled army of the Independents under Major-General Skippon, who is second in command to the new Commander-in-Chief, Sir Thomas Fairfax, now at Windsor. Such strenuous preparations for carrying on the war make the Presbyterians' negotiations for peace with the King at Uxbridge a mere farce, but the farce begun in November still drags on.

Nothing could be in greater contrast to my brother Roger's loquacity with regard to his own and others deeds of daring and hairbreadth escapes than Hugh's reserve. Of his own freewill he speaks not at all of the service he has seen in the Parliamentary ranks, and he answers every question as briefly as possible. Yet methinks a new light burns in his eyes, the light of a repressed enthusiasm, and the lines of his well-cut lips and chin have become more resolutely set.

The piece of work on which Silence plied her needle for so many months in secret was her gift to me at Christmastide. When Hugh saw it for the first time his admiring wonder and pleasure were as great as mine. Of industry alone 'twas a miracle, and what phantasy, what rare colours, and divers stitches are wrought into the picture, which verily would not pale in glory if hung beside the choicest work of the tapestry makers at Mortlake.

The story that Silence hath thus illustrated with

her needle is the legend of St. Olave's, which I related to Laurel soon after they came from Blois, when I took her first to Hart Street. Laurel writ it for Silence on her tablets; but even Laurel never guessed how deeply Silence was impressed by the old story till she revealed her masterpiece to our astonished eyes.

In fair worked letters of antique shape beneath each division of the picture the text is given, and tells how 'there was once in Valois, in France, a cripple so infirm that he went on knees and knuckles, and one day the cripple fell asleep by the roadside and dreamed that a man of worshipful mien came to him, and said: "Go to Olaf's Church in London, and there you will be cured." On waking he set off in quest of Olaf's Church. Coming to London Bridge, he asked the citizens where the church was. And they answered, there were many more St. Olaf's Churches than they could tell. Then a man asked the cripple where he was going, and when he said he would fare to Olaf's Church, they fared together over the bridge and along the street that led to that church. And at the gate of the church the other strode over the threshold and vanished, but the cripple rolled himself over and over, and rose up whole.'

In the first part of Silence's picture, which is

something in the form of a triptych, the figure of the cripple is shown asleep, with the Stranger standing over him, a halo, scarce visible, wrought in finest gold thread round His head, and behind are houses with green shutters and red roofs, for all the world like the houses of Blois, Laurel says. In the second scene, he is faring, 'on knees and knuckles,' across London Bridge, over the winding Thames, with the same faintly-haloed Stranger beside him. And, in the third, he is standing upright in the porch of St. Olave's, with a gladsome look on his face, and his thin hands raised in thankfulness.

Often was I used to tell this miraculous tale to Jane and Jack in the shade of the elms in summer and by the fireside in winter but it did not appeal to them, sound in their limbs and senses, as it has since done to poor mute Silence, who in her childhood's prayers, her gentlewoman hath told me, ever prayed that speech and hearing might be given to her by some miracle from heaven, and that Hugh's shoulders might be made even. Sturdy Jack and Jane loved much better to hear of Olave the Viking than Olave the Saint, their favourite being the story of how Olave destroyed the bridge his enemies had built over the Thames.

Silence's needlework picture, framed in carven

ebony and gold, hangs in my carnation closet, whither Hugh came to look at it. He said that he had never been here before, and of a sudden my conscience smote me at the thought of how little I seem to have won Hugh's confidence in the years I have known him. Had I, belike, in my anxiety to banish all constraint 'twixt myself and my husband's own children, been neglectful of his foster-son ?

I begged him now to sit down, and asked him about Master Haynes and his horoscopes, and his own pursuits, so interrupted by the wars, and, whilst he talked of these things easily, I fain would have read his heart.

Once more he got up and examined the details of Silence's handiwork. He laughed at the bushy little dog she had introduced standing on its hind legs in the foreign street, as if to mock at the poor cripple who went on all fours. Then, with a sigh, he said :

' 'Twas begun at the same time as I did begin to construct my dial ; but Silence has brought her work to completion, whereas mine remains but a beginning still.'

' That is because you went a-soldiering,' said I. ' When there's peace you will have time to work at it again. How rejoiced Silence will be to see your dial finished !'

' I fear it may displease her,' he answered. ' You

see, 'tis to be dial and clock combined. 'Twill tell what time 'tis at Great Cairo and Jerusalem, and I have conceived a plan of mechanism by which it shall strike the hours and play an air of music withal. Silence will not approve of that, for she so dislikes music. But to leave it out would be to sacrifice the most cherished part of the design. Dearly as I love my foster-sister, I could not make the sacrifice for her sake.'

'Wondrous strong is the love Silence hath for you,' I said. 'Methinks few brothers are so loved by their sisters.'

'God bless her for it! Were she verily my sister, I could not feel more tenderly towards her. But,' he added, 'there is another kind of love.'

'And do you know aught of that?' I asked him.

'Yes,' said he.

His honest red-brown eyes looked straight into mine, as if he would fain invite me to guess his secret.

'Mistress Margaret?'

The words leapt to my lips ere I could withhold them.

He shook his head.

'Mistress Margaret Haynes is my spiritual sister. 'Tis she who hath turned my thoughts to things higher than this earth, and shown me the beauty of

holiness. I must ever reverence her for that and for her own sweet piety. To love *her* is the same as loving God's saints.'

'Twas Laurel, then, thought I—Laurel, whom he had not mentioned when he talked of Silence as his foster-sister; Laurel, whose demeanour towards him had become so proud and distant—'twas she whom he loved with that 'other kind of love' which is stronger than the love brothers bear for their sisters. 'You know, but you will not betray me, dear madam. 'Tis unalterable and undying, but must never be spoken of. What right have I to speak of it? I, cast off by the author of my being ere I saw the light; I who have won no name or fame for myself, a prentice not yet master of my calling. No, it must be buried, locked away in my breast always for these reasons alone, even if she who was wont to be so kind a comrade had not come near to hating me since conscience and duty prompted me to draw swords in the cause of faith and freedom.'

He hid his face in his hands, and a great wave of bitterness seemed to sweep over his young soul.

I was much moved by this outpouring from one who had conversed with me hitherto scarce in anything more than monosyllables. I laid my hand soothingly on his close-clipped curls.

'Dear Hugh, take this comfort to yourself,' I

said. 'Laurel's sisterly affection for you has but passed behind a cloud. Be sure that when the clouds roll away it will shine forth again. Dost think Laurel ever forgets that your brave deed saved her sister's life—the sister she so dotes upon?'

'Never was such unselfish sister's love as hers,' said he, looking up. 'Ay, madam, there is no need to tell me that she is noble-hearted and generous; well do I know it.'

'See,' I said, looking out from the oriel; 'they are down there on the grass plot at play with little Olave.'

He came and stood beside me, and we watched together the gambols going on below. The ground was thick with feathery snow, which, as on the day of Hugh's and my stepchildren's arrival from Blois, outlined the gargoyles of the old gray-stone wall and lay on the sundial, hiding its motto, 'I mark only y^e Golden Hours.' My rosy little Viking, wrapped to the ears in fur, was snowballing his half-sister and being snowballed by aged Marie, whose tall starched white cap looked less white in contrast with the snow, and her face above its blue cotton kerchief as yellow as a marigold.

'The garden seems a-bloom with roses,' said Hugh; 'and methinks roses that bloom in the snow are fairer than any.'

Even Silence's pale cheeks in the cold air wore a soft pink, and Laurel's glowed scarlet as the plume aflame in her velvet cap, or the berries on the holly-bush, which she ducked behind in feigned terror of Olave's assault. Her laughing face came forth from its prickly shield, however, just in time to meet the half-melted snowball that burst down her neck, and made her, with a little scream, take up the skirt of her brown-furred gown and race, for fear of being hit again, to another shelter.

Silence was the first to discover who was a spectator of their games. With her eyes she had searched the downstairs casements many times, wondering probably where Hugh was, and why he had not followed them into the garden. When she saw him standing in the oriel, the pink colour that became her so well deepened in her face, which lit up with one of those rare smiles she keeps for the most part for Hugh. Seeing it, Laurel looked up, too, and the sight that had brought a smile to Silence's grave lips worked an opposite effect on hers, for the even white teeth that had been flashing 'twixt them in merry laughter disappeared behind the curves of an almost sternly closed mouth. Olave, methought, was mindful of the change in his tall playmate's aspect, for suddenly his dimpled hand dropped the new snowball he had with much labour

clutched together, and he paused in his joyous halloos.

‘She is beckoning to you,’ said I. ‘She would fain have you join in their frolics.’

‘*She?*’ Hugh repeated; then added quickly: ‘Pardon, you mean it is Silence who beckons.’

And after that what further doubt could there be, even if the conversation ’twixt Hugh and me which I have related had not taken place? What doubt now who for Hugh was the one unexpressive she, as Master Shakespeare has it?

Our Lady Day, 1645.

This is dear Anne Fanshawe’s birthday, a festival which of old was wont to be observed with all sorts of gaieties in Hart Street, but to-day, methinks, she will keep it with tears at Oxford. Poor Anne, we have lately heard from Sir John Harrison, has had the sorrow of losing her firstborn, a weakling from the hour of its birth. And she herself is so little recovered from her illness that her husband was forced to leave her behind him on going last month to Bristol with His Highness the Prince of Wales in his office of Secretary to the Council of War. They were both very cast down at this their first separation, as I can well believe.

Sir John, knowing of Laurel’s admiring worship

of Anne, proposed when he writ to Gabriel that she shall come to be of his daughter's household for a time, and attend her to Bristol when Anne receives her summons from Mr. Fanshawe to travel thither.

Laurel, though she would dearly love to go, and has our consent, cannot yet make up her mind to quit Silence for so long. Silence, on her side, has heard of the proposal with equanimity, and hath even begged Laurel to do as she pleases.

The presence in the house of the small being, who is more helpless by reason of his babyhood than she is from affliction, has indeed made Silence less exigent; yet now that Olave can use his tongue and doth chatter and sing unceasingly, he is not quite the delightful object he was to Silence, methinks, when he lay inarticulate in his deep rockered cradle wrapped in the mysteries of his own dumb world.

March 27.

This morning came a letter for me from my brother Roger out of Oxford. 'Twas brought, I was told, by the hand of a person of somewhat shabby, though gentlemanly, appearance. I commanded the servant to set cheer before him in the ante-chamber 'twixt the hall and the withdrawing-room whilst I perused the letter. I brought it here to my closet, and it took me some time to read, being a long and

rambling epistle, for my brother Roger is as fluent with his pen as his tongue, especially when he would petition me to ask favours for him from Gabriel.

‘GOOD SISTER (Roger ever begins “ Good Sister,” even when ’tis his intention before he ends to reproach me with being a bad one),—I write this from the cockloft over Merton Gate, and trust that it will find you, as usual, flourishing like a green bay-tree. Please take not offence at the comparison drawn from the psalmist, for none is meant. My own condition is very far from flourishing, I do assure you. I can hear you say that I have only myself to thank for’t. Well, let me confess that ’tis so and throw myself on your mercy. I have fallen into the error of dicing with my fellows-in-arms, and have staked higher than I should have done belike. Be that as it may, Fortune hath chosen to frown on me and I have lost heavily, and I am in sore straits for such bare necessaries as a new doublet, shirts, and handkerchiefs, not to speak of accoutrements for the spring campaigning. ’Tis no use to apply at home for help in these matters, as I hear to what sad poverty they are reduced there by the Puritan marauders, so that my father is thinking of a post in Oxon, if such is to be obtained, which I doubt, as crowds of well - known organists and

teachers of music are flocking hither, though there is perchance more likelihood of a musician getting a living here than in your nowsongless, Puritan London. 'Tis a thousand pities he did not take my godmother the widow when she was to be had for the asking, and I warrant that those who put spokes in that wheel are mightily repentant at present. But what avails it to bemoan lost opportunities? I pray you, Lovejoy, to take some pity on the unfortunate brother who addresses these lines to you, and believe that he would fain not trouble you if he weren't driven thereto by his distressful circumstances. I swear never to play for a piece again or so much as to look at a card or a dice-box if you will move your excellent husband to compassionate me and to send me the pittance that he will not miss from his abundance, but which is all I need to put me on my legs again and to enable me to walk straight for the future.

'Should you turn a deaf ear to me in my extremity and harden your own and your husband's heart against me, then all I can say is that you are not the sister I held you for.

'He who carries this letter for me is one Mr. Taller, whom I would fain commend to the notice of your worthy husband, for the sake of his taste in antiquities, and because he hath for sale certain manuscripts

of great rarity and value. Think not that it advantages me an iota whether he finds a patron in Mr. Young. He is but a chance acquaintance who would seem to be in the same plight with regard to moneys as myself, and for whom in consequence I have something of a fellow-feeling.

‘Twill pleasure you to hear that Will holds to his books, despite all the distractions of drilling and marshalling of troops in the quadrangles, and the talk again of Oxford being invested. The sooner we meet this new army of the enemy gotten together after Noll Cromwell’s pattern, the better, say I. They are armed with Bibles as well as swords, ’tis said, and each man is a prophet David in his own eyes. His Majesty did well to reject the terms of peace at Uxbridge, which would have made him but a “King of Straw,” as the Marquis of Montrose has put it. The Marquis vows to come from Scotland to the King’s aid at the head of a gallant army ere the summer is out, so what with them and the Irish, the King is in good hopes. My dutiful respects to my worthy brother-in-law and my most fair stepnieces. When is Mistress Laurel going to make some man the most fortunate in the world? Methinks if she dallies much longer I may venture a hazard in that quarter myself, though of course not without your good leave, which I am sensible you will never give

to one you hold in so low esteem, who nevertheless is humbly and contritely,

‘Your brother,

‘ROGER HOWARD.’

I wonder why I have copied this letter here, unless 'tis because as a memorial of sheer effrontery it deserves not to perish. I felt something like shame when I took it to Gabriel to read, for without murmuring he has most generously helped Roger out of scrapes before this one, and never reproached him for not keeping to his promises of amendments. And even now he has not lost patience, though the impudent reference to Laurel at the end of this letter might well justify him in declining to give Roger any further help.

Gabriel told me to see about the shirts and doublets, and has, I know, already sent the moneys to Oxford. Unspeakable indeed is his goodness to me and mine.

April.

Mr. Taller, the bearer of Roger's letter, has waited on Gabriel again, bringing from his lodgings over against St. Dunstan's in Fleet Street a manuscript copy of the history of Josephus, together with some rare Aldines, which he says that he picked up at Venice and Antwerp when he was secretary to some

nobleman. I think it was Lord Arundell. He has travelled far and wide, and has been in most of the foreign towns that my husband knows so well. He converses easily on divers topics, though in a quiet, modest manner, and Sir Oracle thinks so well of him that he talks of giving him employment in his library. I, for my part, dislike a habit he has of always keeping his eyes downcast, and once I have caught myself wondering why his hair was not red instead of black peppered with gray.

On St. George's Day Hugh came for a few minutes to take his farewells of us, the war having been renewed with great heat and courage, and the Yellow Regiment which he is in being ordered by General Fairfax to march immediately with others to the relief of Taunton, in the west. At the time Mr. Taller was in the library bending over a catalogue, in which he had discovered inaccuracies and advised alterations. He was at the far end of the room, apparently engrossed in the catalogue on his knee, and his presence seemed scarcely noticed by my stepdaughters and their foster-brother. At any rate, it did not hinder Silence from throwing her arms round Hugh and holding him in one of those detaining passionate embraces which methinks of late somewhat embarrass him. Laurel had only given him her hand, which he had let go reluctantly, waiting in vain for the sisterly

kiss which she had been wont to bestow on him at former partings. The parrot was on her shoulder, rubbing its beak against her cheek, and its oft-repeated 'Good-byes' near drowned ours.

Hugh had turned to go, and his hand was on the latch of the door, when the figure at the other end of the room came hastily forward, as if moved by an uncontrollable impulse.

'There is no need to offer you advice, or to warn you before temptations, young man,' said Mr. Taller in a mocking voice, that differed oddly from his customary subdued, almost timid way of speaking. 'You are going to a camp of psalm-singing saints, where innocent amusements, as well as swearing, drunkenness, chambering, and wantoning, are strictly forbid, and men read their Bibles instead of playing at cards and dice.'

Hugh looked surprised at a stranger addressing him thus.

'You speak truly,' he replied; 'such occupations as you name are confined chiefly to those whose powder and steel I go forth to meet.'

'Snares and pitfalls, I presume, are not set for the godly.' Then, recollecting himself suddenly, Mr. Taller seemed anxious to withdraw his sneers. 'Excuse me,' said he, in his old softer and more pleasant voice, 'I would but wish you god-speed on

your errand of danger in a mistaken cause, for you remind me of one for whom I once had a fondness.'

'I thank you, sir,' Hugh said, his steadfast eyes still fixed on the gentleman's countenance in cold astonishment. He did not take the hand offered him, and without another farewell glance at Laurel, who had sent the parrot away and was comforting Silence in her grief at his departure, Hugh went from the room.

Methought Mr. Taller took his leave the instant after with an idea of overtaking Hugh at the gate, but if this were his intention, he was disappointed. Hugh never leaves the Gray House without saying good-bye to his old Blois friends, Alphonse and Marie, and Mr. Taller must have been half-way down Chancery Lane ere Hugh entered it.

It was a real April day of sunshine and cloud, with a silver shower falling now and again. Of her own accord Silence roused herself from her despondency, and instead of fretting for Hugh, went with Miriam Fisher, little Olave, and me into Lincoln's Inn Fields to make a long-promised daisy-chain. My tiny boy begins to understand his favourite silent playmate, and verily, I believe, puts a check on his prattling baby tongue to please her. A sweet picture they were together. Silence sitting on a stile, the

fitful sunshine coming and going on her halo of hair, above her the April sky, with its tumbled masses of purple-tinged clouds, and all round at her feet a silver and gold carpet of daisies and buttercups. She held out her green taffetas apron for the daisies, which Olave plucked with his chubby hands and brought to her gravely, looking up into her face each time as if their business was of great importance. Before the daisy-chain was well begun I left them with Miriam, having promised to meet my sister Peg at the Exchange, as she is to be wed in May, and would fain purchase a stock of bravery at the mercers and furriers, who display their silks and brocaded stuffs in the little shops they have beneath the Exchange.

The Puritan opinions of its citizens have wrought a marked change in the outward aspect of London. 'Tis not only that grass has grown up 'twixt the stones of Whitehall, and the King's pictures and curiosities there are inches thick with cobwebs and dust; the noblemen's fine houses on the Thames bank for the most part empty, and their pleasure-barges moored at anchor from month's end to month's end; but you may go on foot from Holborn to Lombard Street and scarce meet one person that is not plainly clad and of a serious countenance. A cavalier in all the graceful glories of sweeping plumes,

lovelocks, riband knots, fine lace, and sparkling gems is so rare a sight now abroad in the heart of the city, that he is like as not to be hooted and rabbled. The conjurers and mountebanks, and owners of puppet-shows and dancing bears are little seen in the London streets, and methinks these times have ruined them as they have the church organists and organ-builders.

My father cannot yet bring himself to the uprooting which going to seek a post at Oxford would entail, and clings on to the old home in Hart Street. He has sold a precious inlaid ivory lute and an Italian viol, which he greatly valued because it belonged once to the late Mr. Orlando Gibbons, and I nearly always find him, when I come to Hart Street now, sorting his vast accumulation of music, either in manuscript or bound in volumes, in search of something saleable. But, as he says, those who would buy such things cannot, being too low in their fortunes to do so, and those who could will not, having discovered music to be sinful.

Poor Peg would be as badly off for linen and clothes to start her married life as she is for dower, if I were not able to help her. 'Twas my delight to come to the rescue, so I must confess to feeling a little vexed at Peg pouting and taking my advice so ill when I said in the position she was going to fill

such a number of brocaded kirtles, rich taffetas cloaks, and gowns, and gewgaws as she hankered after would scarce be necessary.

‘You wish to be the only fine lady of the family, I see,’ said she. ‘My husband will not be a beggar, although not so rich as yours.’

‘You are fond of harping on my husband’s riches,’ I retorted, ‘but I never hear you mention the generous uses to which he puts them.’

‘And I have profited, you would fain say, by his generosity, and so I am ungrateful.’

‘Nay, I had no desire to say more on the subject, but, if the cap fits, pray wear it.’

These heated words were passing ’twixt Peg and me when Tim dashed out on us from the shop of his Turkey merchant in much excitement, to say his master’s madam and her daughters had seen us from the bay upstairs, and would be pleased if we came in and did them the honour of partaking of their cowslip wine and hardbake.

‘You should come,’ said Tim, ‘if only to see what silk, and satins, and gold chains they wear, and they have so many rings there isn’t room for all on their fingers, so they stick them on their thumbs as well. Why, even you, Lovejoy, aren’t half so fine as they, and, as for Peg, she’s shabby compared with ’em.’

Peg’s cup of mortification was now full.

‘I don’t want their cowslip wine, or to gape on their chains and rings,’ said she. ‘You may tell them, with my respects, if you like, that gentle birth is better than gaudy clothes, as money cannot buy it.’

‘And they might well doubt the possession of gentle birth by the sender of so ungentle a message,’ said Tim.

‘Dear Tim, Peg is weary from her shopping. Give your master’s wife our most polite thanks, and express to her our regret that we cannot tarry to-day.’

On the way home, when I saw Peg biting her lip to keep back her tears, I repented of my sharpness, and said :

‘You shall have that second suit of flowered paduasoy you have set your heart on, Peg. I did not begrudge it you. ’Twas only that I thought there were other useful things you yet lacked that should be considered first ; but belike I was wrong.’

At this, as we were on the doorstep, Peg’s pride broke down, and, no longer restraining her tears, she fell a-weeping on my breast, vowed she had been a ‘hateful wench,’ and begged me to forgive her rude speeches.

In the narrow parlour, Prue and Jane would fain know why Peg, of them all, should be crying—Peg,

who in less than a month would be installed in the little home in Aldersgate, with everything fresh, and new, and pretty, and a serving-woman of her own to dress her hair, instead of sharing with them the offices of old Penelope, who had so many other things to do, and whose strong point is not hair-dressing.

‘And, above all, you will escape the inevitable,’ said Prue, ‘for I begin to see ’tis inevitable.’

‘What?’ I asked.

‘The widow,’ answered Prue.

And methought she had made up her mind to accept the inevitable with a philosophic complacence very different from her old antagonism.

But not so Jane.

‘I would liefer go to a boarding-school than live with such a pestilential stepmother,’ she declared vehemently. ‘Will not you and Gabriel send me to that famous place for young gentlewomen across the Thames where they are taught all the arts?’

‘A school might certainly teach you to use prettier language,’ said I, ‘but you could not abide there always.’

‘No, but afterwards I would go as waiting-maid to some sweet, fair lady of quality—Mrs. Anne Fanshawe, belike. If you were to ask her, Lovejoy, she would take me.’

I could only smile at Jane, who was yet in pinafores, and wore her golden locks unbound, thus gravely planning her future, though, true enough, there are maids of as tender years as she who have plighted their troth, and even been wed. The little Princess of Orange, the King's eldest daughter, for instance, has been married these five years, longer than I have, and is still but a child.

'Twas on coming back to the Gray House that Laurel met me, and told me that, if I would spare her, she would go to Oxford, for the pleasure of being with Anne Fanshawe was one she knew not longer how to deny herself.

'You cannot resist another Maytime in Oxford?' said I.

'But it will not be like the last,' she answered, and I saw a look of wistfulness in Laurel's eyes.

IX

LAUREL'S LETTERS*

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, OXON,
May, 1645.

SWEET MOTHER,

I would have writ from Kingston, but we lay at the Grange but one night, and my father will have returned to you by now, and will tell you how it fared with me that far.

The next morning was fair and bright, and I was up betimes and on the road with my companions. 'Twas the same we took last spring when we came with Will. This time we fell in with no beauteous runaway Mrs. Milton outside Windsor, and I would there had been anything half so pretty to look upon in the inn parlour where we rested. 'Twas full of a parcel of Puritan folk, as grim and forbidding of men as any to be seen in London. We met with divers

* The letters inserted here in the journal of Mistress Lovejoy Young were written to her from Oxford and Bristol by her stepdaughter, who at this time was staying with her kinswoman, Mrs. Fanshawe—EDITOR.

parties of troopers by the way, and in one of the villages we passed through we heard shots fired; for there had been an affray 'twixt some of the Parliament's garrison at Aylesbury, who were roving the country, and some of the King's from Wallingford; and I believe 'twas that gallant acquaintance of Mrs. Milton's, young Captain Gardiner, brother of Sir Thomas Gardiner, who was giving the rebels chase. We were just in time to see them flying over a turnip-field. But we came on a finer martial spectacle than this ere we rid into Oxford. Whilst the sentinel examined our pass we were obliged to back our horses to let the King's foot-guards in blue, under command of Lord Bernard Stuart, and a troop of his cavalry, go by, setting forth, with drums and music, for the march to Chester, in which direction His Majesty was to follow them on the morrow, to meet Prince Rupert. The King was at service in Trinity College Chapel in the morning, ere he started out, and I, to my infinite contentment, being there with Margaret Harrison, looked on his kingly face again. It wore a cheerfuller expression, and was not so pale, methought, as when I beheld it in the moonlight on Christ Church quad a year ago. The King joined in the chanting of the psalms, and a diamond on one of his fingers flashed in the sunlight as he moved his hand in time to the anthem.

Pray God that what His Majesty goes forth to adventure this time may succeed!

There is as fine singing in the chapels here as ever, and 'tis good to hear it and church bells once more. The sound of the organ, when first I heard it again, brought tears to my eyes for thinking of poor Master Howard, who has been so cruelly robbed of his.

Your brother Roger's troop is now gone out of garrison with the King, but I saw him at the Fleur de Luce when I alighted there at the end of my journey. He did inquire rather anxiously how we liked his Mr. Taller, at which I laughed, and answered that I believed my father approved his learning, but, so far as I was concerned, he had made scarce any impression on me, appearing so colourless a person; but I must admit I forgot when I said it how he had spoken to Hugh, and for a moment shown himself in another character.

I know not how I come to have writ all this without telling you that which you must thirst to know—news of dear Mistress Anne Fanshawe. She received me with all her usual warmth and kindness, as did her father. Her illness hath wrought such a change in her looks that at first I vow I should scarce have known her to be the same creature as we saw wed last May. But something has happened since I came that has brought back the old colour to her



LADY FANSHAWE.

From the Engraving by Fiesinger.

cheeks and lips, and I verily believe she will soon be herself again if she continues to mend at the pace she hath done these two days. 'Twas on Sunday, the first day Mistress Anne Fanshawe came out of her chamber to go to church, and after service she was holding my arm on one side and her sister Margaret's on the other, being yet too weak to go alone, when a gentleman came forward to meet us with a packet in his hand, which he gave to Mistress Fanshawe, saying it contained fifty pieces of gold and a letter from her husband. Her joy may be conceived, and she was nearly overcome as she, that instant, read the letter, telling her to come to Bristol on Thursday in next week, when men and horses and all accommodation for the journey would be sent her.

'Come, let us go and sit in the air, on the mount in St. John's College Garden,' said she, 'for I am now too happy to go within doors, and will fain drink in strength as fast as I can for Thursday.'

So we took her to a seat beneath a spreading ash, and here her father and all of her household came to her, and she imparted her glad tidings to them, laughing and weeping together, and everyone rejoiced with her. She has since bid me tune my lute and sing the merriest songs I know. She likes to have me with her, and is so good as to take delight withal in my singing; but yesterday she drove me and

Margaret from her side to go a-pleasuring without her, with Will and some others, in rowing-boats on the river. The water sparkled like silver and the sky was cloudless blue, and from end to end the meadows were enamelled with flowers. The boats were moored, and we plucked the fritillaries that start up like lilac spear-heads among the sedges and bull-rushes by the waterside. 'Tis a fair Maytime, and Oxford is a fair city, but methinks Bristol will seem fairer to Mistress Fanshawe's eyes. When next I write 'twill be from there if all go well. . . .

I am, with a thousand messages of love to my sister and my dear respects to you and my father, your daughter

LAUREL.

For MISTRESS YOUNG,
at the Gray House in London,
by the Gateway of Lincoln's Inn,
Chancery Lane.

MR. FANSHAWE'S LODGINGS,
NEAR THE CASTLE, BRISTOL,
May 25, 1648.

SWEET MOTHER AND HONOURED FATHER,

As I foretold in my last, my second letter is writ from this hilly, gray old town, that stands on a brown river, the like of which I never saw for muddiness.

I must tell you that we arrived here without misadventure. We set out from Oxford at nightfall, it being deemed safer to travel by night, as the enemy were quartered by the way. We were a merry party, taking our tune from Mistress Fanshawe, who was in the gayest of spirits. 'Twas enchanting to ride mile on mile under the May moon, and then to see it fade out of the sky and the stars die one by one, leaving the floor of heaven ready for the rosy pageant of the dawn. For twelve miles of the way a troop of horse rid with us, sent courteously from the garrison by Sir Marmaduke Rawdon to accompany Mistress Fanshawe till dangers of being surprised by the enemy were past.

This is a fair lodging, in a steep street, whence the shipping on the brown river is to be seen, and some frowning gray rocks that overhang it, covered with wild gilliflowers. You should have seen how joyfully Mistress Anne flew into her husband's arms when he came in from the council some hours after our arrival. I, being in her apartments, did witness the meeting betwixt them, and saw him put into her hands a hundred pieces of gold, saying, 'I know thou that keeps my heart so well wilt keep my fortune, which from this time I will ever put into thy hands, as God shall bless its increase.'

At night Mistress Fanshawe called me to soothe

her with a song, and I found her clad in a white wrapping-robe, and truly her eyes were as sparkling, and her cheeks as pink, and her air as vivacious as when she was a maid.

‘I feel now as if all my troubles were over,’ said she. ‘Indeed, I am as happy as any queen. And what queen could have a more glorious crown than I have in my husband? You, Laurel, think this exaggerated talk. Nay; but wait till some man as wise and good is your husband, then you will understand what ’tis to have his soul dote on you.’

I replied that I could well understand her feelings without waiting for a husband, and if I waited for a good and wise one, methought I should wait for ever and a day, as among those who come a-wooing to my father’s house, in obedience to their parents’ or guardians’ wishes rather than to the dictates of their own hearts, none seemed to be distinguished for wisdom; and as for goodness, the good were generally too simple and clownish to please me. Dear Mistress Fanshawe looked quite grave at this—just as I have seen you look, mother, when I have said the like to you; but ’tis true, nevertheless. Wise and good men do not grow on every bush. Mr. Fanshawe, I admit, is both, and handsome and charming to boot.

The lords of the Council have their ladies with

them here, and they come in and out to Mistress Fanshawe very frequently and intimately, as do my Lady Rivers, my Lady Aubigny, and the Lady Isabella Thynne, who is exquisitely fair to look upon. Knowing Mr. Waller's lines to her playing on the lute, I was shy last night to touch mine before her. But her ladyship was graciously pleased to compliment my singing. Only once had she heard anything like it, declared she, and that was last spring, before the Queen left Oxford, when some strolling musicians, one of whom was a woman in a rusty, patched cloak, came and performed before the Court in Christ Church quadrangle, and reaped a rich harvest, because of the 'rare melting sweetness' of the woman's voice.

I think I must have blushed, for her ladyship fixed her beautiful eyes on my face searchingly, it seemed to me, as she added: 'There were those in the company ready to take their oath on't that the rusty cloak was a disguise, and the woman with the pure, true notes no vagrant. Richard Lovelace, the soldier poet, said he recognised the voice as one that he had heard in very different surroundings, and aroused some curiosity by throwing the songstress a flower instead of money.' This time I am sure that I blushed, and I made an excuse to go from the room to fetch a music-book. When I came back 'twas a relief to find the Lady Isabella's attention taken up

in showing the rest of the company the steps of a dance she calls the Almain.

For my Lady Rivers Mistress Fanshawe entertains a great affection and reverence, for she is a brave woman, who has suffered many thousand pounds loss for the King. 'Tis in her coach that we have been to take the air on a wild country place near here called the Downs, whence one looks across wooded slopes to the Channel sea beyond.

'Twas driving back to-day that I heard my Lady Rivers banter Mistress Fanshawe on keeping state secrets so well.

'What state secrets?' asked Mistress Fanshawe, opening her blue eyes very wide and innocently. 'Forsooth, I know none.'

'Is it possible with a husband who holds so important a political position? Why, my dear, you disregard rare opportunities of becoming acquainted with state affairs. You should prevail with Mr. Fanshawe to impart to you the contents of the packets and missives that pass constantly through his hands. You might in this way wield an influence equal to my Lady Aubigny and divers others I could name.'

'But they have older and steadier heads on their shoulders than I have,' Cousin Anne made answer.

'They began when they were as young and ignorant

as you are to interest themselves in politics,' my Lady Rivers persisted.

'How shall I make a beginning?' Mistress Fanshawe inquired.

Lady Rivers said it was very simple. She knew for certain that a post had come in the night from the Queen in Paris, and if she asked her husband privately he would be sure to tell her what he found in the packet, and then Mistress Fanshawe might impart the news to her, for she would be extremely glad to hear what were the Queen's latest commands to the King concerning his affairs. 'Twas not my place to put in a word, was it, mother? but methought my Lady Rivers' advice was given more for her own advantage than for Mistress Fanshawe's.

When her husband came in from the Council later with his hands full of papers, I saw Cousin Anne Fanshawe eye them, and she followed him into his study. They had not been long together before she came forth alone, with a vexed and disappointed air. At supper she would not eat, and scarcely spoke at all, though Mr. Fanshawe sat beside her, and drank to her often—as is his custom—and made discourse with me and the rest of the company at table in his pleasant, courteous fashion. The cloud yet rests on her, eclipsing her sweet gaiety, and you, dear mother, will burn to know the cause of her sadness; but I

must close this letter without telling you, for I have not wholly discovered it myself, though I have my suspicions thereof.

Your LAUREL.

BRISTOL,
June 5.

DEAR MOTHER,

I know naught that I can write concerning dear Cousin Anne Fanshawe will weary you, as you value so highly her loving friendship. Well, then, it will pleasure you to learn that the cloud has cleared, and her happy smiles beam forth again, like the sunshine after a shower. I feel proud that I have had the whole story from her own lips. She told me everything whilst I was winding some skeins of silk for her in her closet yesterday.

'Tis for me to sing to-day,' said she, 'out of sheer light-heartedness. I am like a child that hath been kissed and forgiven for its naughtiness, though truly my conduct now seems to me more vile than any naughty child's, and I blush to think of it. After what my Lady Rivers said I was fool enough to imagine that inquiring into public affairs being a fashionable thing I might try it, and so become more thought of and beloved by my husband than I was—as if that were possible. So I followed him into his study, and when he turned in surprise and asked,

“What wouldst thou have, my life?” I replied that I heard the Prince had received a packet from the Queen, and I guessed it was that in his hands, and I desired to know what was in it. He said: “My love, I will come to thee as soon as I can; pray thee go, for I am very busy.” Just before supper I revived my suit. He kissed me and talked of other things, and that was why I did not eat or speak at table, as you must have noticed. Going to bed I asked again, but he stopped my mouth with kisses, and I went to bed to cry, not to sleep. In the morning, when he was called to rise early as usual, he began to discourse with me first; but I made no reply, so he rose, drew the curtains softly, and went to Court. On his coming home to dinner I ran to him and took his hand and said, “Thou dost not care to see me troubled?” to which he, taking me in his arms, answered: “My dearest soul, nothing upon earth can afflict me like that, and when you asked me of my business it was wholly out of my power to satisfy thee, for my life and fortune shall be thine and every thought of my heart in which the trust I am in may not be revealed, but my honour is my own, which I cannot preserve if I communicate the Prince’s affairs; and, pray thee, with this rest satisfied.” And after such forbearance and reason I was so ashamed of my folly that I have resolved never till the day of my death to pry again

into any of his business, except what he communicates to me of his own freewill. And there, Laurel,' added she, laughing, 'is a lesson for you, child, to profit by when you have gotten your wise and good husband.'

But I would not promise her to profit by it, for, methinks, single or wed, if I had the chance, I would not hesitate to learn state secrets if by so doing I could be of any service to the King's cause. Not that there is any necessity for Mistress Fanshawe to interfere; her husband being so stout and faithful a servant of His Majesty, she may safely be easy in her mind and leave all to him.

The night the news came here that the King had taken Leicester we sang merry ditties and danced galliards far into the night. But one swallow does not make a summer, and 'tis said that the fortune of the Royalists in the West is ebbing day by day, through the quarrels and jealousy amongst the Generals and officers and the plundering of the soldiers. The Prince's presence here has made matters worse instead of better, as was expected. Sir Edward Hyde and Lord Colpepper speak with disgust of the 'knavish' Generals Goring and Grenville and their 'beggarly troops.'

In these hot days the air of Bristol is near to stifle one, and the waters of the Avon very foul. In the poorer streets the plague is beginning to rage apace.

'Tis likely that the Prince and his retinue will move before long to Barnstaple. We scarce ever catch sight of the Prince, except in church, for 'tis not the mode for women to associate with a Court composed of men, even when their husbands are of it, Mistress Fanshawe says. The Prince hath so serious an air for fourteen—and no wonder. Cousin Anne bids me give you her tenderest remembrances. She questions me often about you and the bonny Viking, and shows a lively interest in all I tell her of Silence and her wondrous needlework pictures, especially that of the miracle of St. Olave.

Your affectionate daughter,

LAUREL.

AT MR. PALMER'S, BARNSTAPLE,

July —.

MOTHER,

'Tis scarce worth while to write to you this post, as 'tis possible I may arrive soon after my letter. My Lady Capel hath obtained a pass from the Earl of Essex, and travels hence to London in a few days with her daughter, and I am resolved to be of her party, as she is kind enough to offer me her escort. What you tell me in your last letter about Silence keeping her chamber disquiets me on her account, so that I cannot be happy in my mind to tarry longer away from her. 'Tis more like to be

that she is pining for Hugh l'Estrange than suffering from a spleen. Methinks she would have taken the herb-posset from my hand if I had been there, and not flirted it over the coverlid.

You say that naught has been heard of Hugh since Naseby, either by Master Haynes or my father, though his regiment, with Major Skippon, is returned. Such uncertainty alone is enough to make Silence sick.

Perchance Hugh was taken a prisoner in the earlier part of the fight, which went in the King's favour, and so will certainly be released or exchanged, he being on the victorious side, alack. I say alack, not for Hugh's chance of 'scaping, but for the grievous routing and scattering of the King's forces on Naseby Field. The details of that great calamity are so heart-breaking I can scarce bear to hear them talked of. In the discourse at table last night 'twas said by Mr. Fanshawe that the King's cabinet of confidential letters that was taken to London with the rest of the booty and the five thousand prisoners is to be opened publicly in the Guildhall, and its contents read aloud for all the world and his wife to hearken to. This seems to me the worst misfortune that has befallen His Majesty hitherto.

Mr. and Mrs. Fanshawe have been most handsomely entertained here, and had every honour paid them by the Governor of Barnstaple. 'Tis a fine town, with

clean streets and a fresh air from the sea, which is not many miles away. Thither we rid one day in coaches, and partook of an *al-fresco* collation spread for us on the shore among the sand-banks. These people of Devon make a cream so thick and rich that instead of trickling it stands in lumps. 'Tis most excellent eat with pies and fruit; and their capons and fowls seem plumper and sweeter than those to be got in or near London. But my mistress will have 'tis not so, that 'tis the salt in the air which makes us so hungry that it gives us a relish for everything we eat here. Simply 'mistress' I am now to call her, for 'Mistress Fanshawe' seems too formal and 'Cousin Anne' too familiar, and I love to be her servant. Yet 'tis not much service I have done her: singing songs, winding skeins, playing at shuttlecock, scarce come under that head. My dear mistress says that at such times as they shall have occasion to come to London she will summon me again to her service, with yours and my father's permission. 'If it be still theirs to ask,' she did add roguishly, 'and they have not by then given you into the keeping of that good and wise husband.' Then to tease me she ran through the names, fortunes, and commendations of the most personable Cavaliers that she considers have shown me attention here and in Bristol, and said if I liked she would take a leaf out of my Lady

Eleanor Davies' book and tell me by the cards which of them would fall to my lot. But 'tis her converse in graver moods that is most pleasing and flattering to me, because she is then every whit as free and confidential.

Mr. Fanshawe grows in the Prince's favour, at which Sir Edward Hyde is not best pleased. Despite all his engagements in the Prince's business, Mr. Fanshawe has found time to put the finishing touches to his translation of the Italian 'Pastor Fido,' which he begun at Oxford. He bid me tell my father this, for, said he, 'I know his love for poets and poetry equals my own.'

I need not have writ of all these trifles when I shall soon have the opportunity of communicating them and a hundred more to you by word of mouth. Till then, adieu.

Your loving daughter,

LAUREL.

For MISTRESS YOUNG,
at the Gray House in Chancery Lane,
London.

July 31.

DEAR MOTHER,

Little did I think when last I writ out of Barnstaple that I should not have reached home by now, or that I should have occasion to despatch you

another letter, and from this village hostel. My Lady Capel has promised to explain how she came to leave me, with great reluctancy, behind here at the Blue Boar, and you will set her ladyship's mind at rest, which, methinks, has been unduly exercised as to whether Hugh l'Estrange, who lies here deadly sick of wounds and fever, is my foster-brother or not. Even were he no brother, but a mere acquaintance, I should scarce have been human had I passed by on the other side, as her ladyship fain would have had me, when Providence, or the hazards of war—whichever you like to call it—thus brought him in my path, with wounds very noisome from being untended, lying on straw in the sorriest condition conceivable. 'Twas indeed by chance that we came to the Blue Boar at all, for had my Lady Capel's horse not cast a shoe we should assuredly not have stopped at the inn whilst it was taken to be shod at the blacksmith's in the village street. The house and yard being full of Parliament troopers—who, despite their godliness, seemed to be drinking as deeply of the landlady's ale as any Cavaliers could have done—we went out to rest in an arbour in the garden.

But, as we drew near it, groans and delirious babblings fell on our ear, and the landlady came running from the yard. 'Ladies, don't go in there!'

cried she. ' 'Tis a wounded musqueteer—no sight for pretty ladies' eyes.' My Lady Capel and her women turned about, but I felt an impulse to go on to see what the cause was of such distressful sounds. So I went boldly in, and there lay Hugh on the floor of the arbour, his clothes blood-stained, his hair matted, his face and eyes aflame with fever. 'Twas a grievous sight, mother. I should scarce have recognised him, he being the last person I expected to see; but, unconscious though he was, he called my name thrice. All his strength seemed in his voice, for he was too weak to brush the flies from his forehead. A man-servant of Lady Capel's did, at my request, rip off Hugh's doublet, and together we washed and dressed the wounds on his arm and chest, I tearing up my handkerchief and fine lawn chemisette for the purpose.

Ay, glad am I that, thanks to your teaching, I am not squeamish, and understand the bandaging of sores, and how to concoct balsams of herbs and plaisters. Such knowledge has proved useful, and hath served Hugh in good stead. He is eased of much of his pain, though still too fevered to know who his leech and nurse may be. I had hardly gotten well to my work when an urgent summons came from my Lady Capel to say her party must get to horse without more delay, and would I be pleased

not to keep them waiting. I sent back a message that they must go without me. This brought my lady herself to the door of the arbour in great dudgeon. She was answerable, both to Mrs. Fanshawe and my parents, she declared, for my safe passage to London, and how was I to get there without the aid of her pass? I had better come at once.

‘Would you, my lady,’ asked I, ‘leave your brother if you had chanced to find him in so desperate and bleeding a plight as this?’

‘Brother?’ she exclaimed. ‘I see no trace of a family resemblance betwixt you. And how comes your brother to be here, alone and uncared for? And why do none in yonder hot-bed of Roundheads concern themselves about him, as he wears their colours?’

That I could not say, for ’twas not till some time after my Lady Capel had abandoned her attempts to turn me from my resolution, and she and her cavalcade had clattered off, leaving me one servant for protection, that I learned from the landlady how Hugh came to be here. His presence had no connection with that of the Parliamentarian troopers, who had arrived but the night before, and were leaving at noon to follow General Fairfax into Somerset. The hostel had been crowded with

Cavaliers, mostly fugitives from Naseby Field, when Hugh had been brought in swooning by a gentleman wearing a perruque and short red cloak, armed with a long rapier and pistols, whom the landlady took for a 'soldier of fortune.' There being hardly standing room in the house, and the weather extreme hot, he had laid his fainting companion in the arbour, and afterwards had sat up all night dicing in turns with half a dozen others. At cockcrow he had counted his winnings and rid away, saying he had important business in London.

The landlady's excuse for having paid such scant attention to Hugh's needs is that the inroads of first one army and then of the other had near driven her out of her wits.

'There's not a pin to choose betwixt them,' she said. 'If the Cavaliers are the worst for drinking and gaming, 'tis the Roundheads who eat one out of house and home, and split one's ears with their psalm-singing. They have not left a fowl in the roost. Were I a wife and a mother, instead of a poor, lone, childless widow, I'd hound on my husband and sons to rise against both of 'em and join the clubmen.'

'Tis quiet enough here now, since the Roundheads went, but the poor woman says 'tis only a lull in the storm. I am despatching this post-haste by Lady

Capel's man, and pray that a litter and an escort may be sent hither to be in readiness for Hugh's removal. Tell Silence Hugh shall not die if I can help it.

Your affectionate daughter,

LAUREL.

X

THE CARNATION CLOSET,
AT THE GRAY HOUSE,
February, 1646.

ONCE I writ in this book of news coming to London from every quarter of success for the King's cause: of battles won and towns taken by the King's Generals; now 'tis all the other way. 'The whirligig of time,' as Sir Oracle says, 'has brought in its revenges.' After vanquishing the Royalists at Naseby, the Generals Fairfax and Cromwell have, by long marches and swift blows, achieved one victory after another, taking strong towns and forts without number, till all the West and nearly the whole country is being reduced to the obedience of the Parliament.

Through this sharp and bitter winter the new army has not rested. I have heard people say here in London, where its triumphs over a gallant and potent enemy cause great rejoicing, that Almighty God has exercised a miraculous providence over the

camp, in which no vices, wantonness, oaths, or profane words go unpunished.

Be that as it may, there cannot exist any doubt of the low ebb the royal fortunes have now reached. Prince Rupert has thrown up the game since he lost Bristol for the King, and is gone out of England with his brother.

His Majesty, 'tis said, still clings to the hope that the intrigues and secret treaties he authorized his devoted Catholic servant, Lord Glamorgan, to enter into with the Irish rebels may yet bear fruit, and at least save Chester. This looked-for aid hath failed him hitherto, as has that of the Queen's promised Lorrainers.

When the King's cabinet of letters, taken at Naseby, was opened at the Guildhall, and passages therefrom read to the citizens, all London rang with indignation at the duplicity this correspondence with Lord Ormond and with his Queen was supposed to reveal.

Many good men, my husband among them, thought it matter for regret that the King's actions agreed so ill with his words, and that while he had professed the preservation of the Protestant religion was dear to his heart, he had been promising favours to the Roman Catholics in Ireland, and that the laws made to punish them when they had risen and murdered

the Protestants in cold blood after Lord Strafford's death should not any longer be enforced against them if they sent 20,000 men to assist him in England.

He had said that he abhorred the idea of bringing foreign soldiers into the kingdom, and yet had solicited, through his Queen, the Duke of Lorraine for help. The citizens and the Parliament expressed themselves sorely displeased at the King being so much ruled by the will of his wife; for these letters showed that he did everything by her prescript, and that she dictated to him in matters concerning peace and war, Church and Parliament. The King is mightily unfortunate in that all his plots are sooner or later brought to light. For hardly had the excitement in London caused by the making public of the Naseby letters somewhat subsided than more papers and a duplicate of his secret warrant to Lord Glamorgan were taken in October at the Battle of Sligo, from the coach of the slain Archbishop of Tuam.

At that time Hugh l'Estrange was lying 'twixt life and death in this house; the dangerous wound at the back of his head, which the chirurgeon thought to be of later date than those on his chest and arm, gotten by bullets at Naseby, causing his fever to break out anew and run high for many weeks. His recovery

was slow, and at times despaired of, and even now his right hand is maimed through the injury to his arm, and he is still disabled for either soldiering or dialling, though he has returned to Master Haynes.

In his sickness Laurel has been a tender nurse to him here, as she was his nurse and leech withal at the wayside hostel, where 'twas she chanced to hap on Hugh in woeful plight on her road from Barnstable in company with my Lady Capel.

Laurel seemed, when she brought Hugh home, to have forgot that there was ever any estrangement betwixt them, and all her proud little airs towards him. He might have been battered and banged in the Royalist cause instead of against it so overwhelmed was she with pity and concernment for him in his helplessness and pain.

Laurel would not resign her care of Hugh to me or anyone, and 'twas she who gave orders that he should be laid in the green-velvet room instead of taken upstairs to the smaller guest-chamber, which has been called in the house Hugh's chamber since he occupied it when they came from Blois.

After Naseby fight, when weeks went by and no tidings had come of Hugh, though we sent daily for them to Master Haynes in Cheapside, poor Silence fell into a lethargy of misery. She would not rise, and only with difficulty could be prevailed on to

touch food. Olave lost his favourite playmate, and all his baby wiles failed to charm a smile from Silence's pale, sad lips. She declared repeatedly on her tablets that in a dream she had seen Hugh being done to death, not in battle, but in some private, lonely place. So when at last he was brought to the Gray House, half dead, Silence rose and came out of her chamber, near to rejoicing because he was not wholly dead, as she had so feared. But she soon relapsed into grief again, for she could not tolerate the sight of his pain; and whilst Laurel watched by him and laid salves on his hurts, Silence lay crouched up outside the door like a faithful dog, not daring to enter, but listening with her great, wistful eyes.

Hugh was unlike himself in fever in that he was exceeding talkative. In his delirious wanderings he told us more of the fatal fray among the ditches and blackthorn hedges of Naseby plain than we should ever have learned from him had he been conscious. At his bedside we heard how the Puritan watchword 'God for us!' rang through the summer air; how at first it seemed as if Prince Rupert's dashing charge would sweep all before it and carry the day, Ireton being taken prisoner, and the lion-hearted Skippon, idol of the Londoners, of the 'Yellow Regiment,' falling wounded in their midst; how Fairfax's helmet had been beaten off, and he had fought bareheaded

in a rain of bullets, his high stature, floating black curls, and short red cloak giving him so strong a likeness to Prince Rupert that one of the Prince's own men once actually addressed him for His Highness; how Cromwell's Ironsides did their deadly work, and the King, giving a courageous command for a last rally, had his bridle pulled, which turned his horse, and on the instant caused the whole of his shattered army to turn likewise and fly in wildest disorder. This outline of what had happened at Naseby we pieced together from Hugh's fevered gabbling, with the help of facts we knew before from the news-sheets. But the pieces for the puzzle of Hugh's adventure during the time 'twixt the battle and his coming to the hostel where Laurel found him were more complicated. He did rave much about a letter in cipher—the 'Queen's letter' he called it. It had been in his possession and been stolen from him, that was clear; but how had he come by it, and how lost it? It seemed as if after the battle he may have regained his consciousness, lying in the moonlight among the dead and dying somewhere near the spot where the routed Cavaliers' baggage train had stood, and had stretched out his hand to grasp something white—a paper on which the moon shone. Maybe in the mêlée and rush it had been shaken from that captured cabinet of the King's

—over which so much ado has been made—or even fallen from His Majesty's saddle. Over and over again in his delirium Hugh would try to stretch out his wounded arm and seize some imaginary object. Next he would be feeling for it beneath his jerkin; then there would be a terrible struggle with a foe of air, and the letter was gone. But Hugh was not always in the wars as he wandered. Sometimes he was back on his bench at Master Haynes's 'carving out dials point by point,' or in sober converse with Mistress Margaret in the spacious parlour upstairs. He looked through the great telescope on the leads at the planet Venus, invoking it as 'brightest and fairest Queen of the heavens, unrivalled among stars, as my love is among maids.' And then he was in the old Blois garden, calling on his 'love' with so much passionate pleading that Laurel turned to me sighingly and whispered:

'Would that Silence's ears could be unstopped for five minutes, that she might hear him!'

'Silence is not his love,' said I.

'Tut! I will never believe 'tis Mistress Margaret,' she made retort.

'No, 'tis not Mistress Margaret.'

And, as if to confirm me, Hugh burst forth again:

'My love! Her name is Laurel. But laurels—such laurels as my love—are not for me to win.'

They crown gallant poets with beautiful souls in beautiful bodies, not misshapen prentices.'

Laurel dropped on her knees, and bowed her nut-brown head over the feverish left hand, clasped in her cool fingers. Methought she knew now, if she had not known before, who was poor Hugh's love.

When Hugh crept back from the gates of death to health, Laurel would fain have questioned him about the letter that we had heard so much of whilst he lay sick, but our chirurgeon, Dr. Bathurst, forbad it, saying Hugh's overwrought brain had best be allowed to rest, and unless he spake of the events that brought him to so pitiful a condition, 'twas not for us to revive his memory of them. Laurel would not for the world forfeit Dr. Bathurst's good opinion of her skill as a sick-nurse, so she has been content to divert Hugh in his convalescence by reading or singing to him, and has broken the vow she once made never to play chess with him again.

Since the eve of Naseby, when he abruptly disappeared, we had heard and seen nothing of Mr. Taller, whom Gabriel commissioned to draw up a new catalogue of his books and manuscripts, till the forenoon last month that I walked with my husband to Mr. Husband's, the bookseller and printer to the Commons, whose shop is at the

Golden Dragon, in Fleet Street, near the Inner Temple. It happened to be the day on which, by order of the Parliament, Mr. Husband had printed and published His Majesty's secret papers, taken at Sligo three months ago. Their contents having been kept private for so long had raised curiosity regarding them to the highest pitch, and crowds were pressing round the shop, eager to obtain a copy of the pamphlet published under the title of 'The Irish Cabinet ; or, His Majesty's Secret Transactions for Establishing the Papal Clergy in Ireland. With other Matters of High Consequence taken in the Carriage of the Archbishop at Tuam, who was slain in the Late Fight at Sligo in that Kingdom.'

On a table in front of the shop were piles of the pamphlet fresh from the press, rapidly diminishing, however, as the purchasers carried them off, many reading passages to themselves or aloud as they went along the street, with great groans and execrations. In this crowd I saw Mr. Taller, in his shabby black cloak, walking away, as if in a hurry, with the book under his arm, and his eyes cast down. The excitement about the King's papers was so intense that no one talked of aught else, and Gabriel had to abandon the purpose of his errand to the Golden Dragon, which concerned something as remote from

the burning question of the hour as the illuminated manuscript of an old French romance, 'The Romaunt of the Rose.'

In the afternoon of the same day Gabriel took barge for Kingston, he being summoned to the death-bed of one of his kinsfolk there, and hence it came to pass that, on the next day, I was without my Sir Oracle's counsel and support in an extraordinary situation.

We were assembled in the nursery, where Hugh had been practising his left hand in the fashioning and painting of a reflective dial, now nearly finished, on the ceiling. My little Viking watched him, earnest and enthralled, whilst Silence took delight in handing to him his compass and other implements in the order he wanted to use them. A piece of looking-glass was fixed horizontally in one of the southern windows, reflecting the rays of the pale January sun upon the hour-lines. Old Marie, in blue stuff gown, white cap, and sabots, sat by the wide hearth, with Olave's playthings scattered, where he had left them, at her feet, and his horn-book in her lap. The ruddy glow from the blazing logs put to shame the faint, wintry sunlight, and flickered and danced on the old face, with its thousands of wrinkles, on the young figures grouped beneath the dial, and on the shining dark-oak beams and the

needlework pictures wrought for Olave by Silence's skilled, untiring fingers.

Laurel, who stood near the window, with her eyes bent on the piece of looking-glass, exclaimed of a sudden :

'There's a face in the glass—nay, but now it hath vanished again !'

I went quickly and pushed open a lattice, and beheld a man standing on the outside stone stairway below.

'Who goes there ?' I called out.

'One who craves your pardon and mercy, madam, and permission to take refuge beneath your roof.'

The voice was Mr. Taller's, but 'twas no Mr. Taller who, without waiting for the permission he craved, immediately passed into the house, and, with swift steps, ascended and broke in on us breathlessly.

I recognised the face of deathly hue, the fine-cut features—their beauty marred by the lines evil living had left on them—the abundant locks of tawny red, and the lowering brows.

He stood there, unmasked and undisguised, in sparkish but tawdry clothes, the gold lace on his coat tarnished, his riband knots soiled, his boots so very high and deeply turned down that his legs must needs straggle apart. There was a hunted look in

his eyes, which roved restlessly from Laurel to me, and then again to Laurel, oblivious, apparently, of the others' presence in the room.

'I am tracked—run to earth,' said he. 'At this moment they are searching for me in the next house, where I have lodged, and the rabble is at the door, thirsting for my blood. You know what a London rabble is! 'Tis the publishing of these Irish papers that hath incensed them to madness. Fools! what understanding have they of the matter? Where is the infamy of a Sovereign granting his Irish subjects the liberty to exercise the religion of their forefathers—the religion they would die for a hundred times over, which for them is the only religion? I will be open with you now, for naught is to be gained by being otherwise. I was an agent of the late Archbishop of Tuam and of Lord Glamorgan. I have moved heaven and earth, and gone through fire and water, to serve the Catholic Church and to save the King. At this extremity only the Irish can save him. I have carried letters from the Queen in France to the King, and from the King to the Nuncio and Lord Glamorgan, and from Lord Glamorgan to the Lord-Lieutenant. In all my comings and goings I ever found London the safest haven wherein to lie at anchor till to-day, when 'tis like to prove a death-trap. Through the circu-

lating of this cursed pamphlet, I, Dominico Spinola, am discovered and undone, and driven to throw myself on the pity of you gentlewomen to save my life!

'Twas surprising that he could speak so much and so composedly with an outraged mob almost on his heels. He betrayed his fear only in his eyes, which turned constantly, like those of a hunted animal, in the direction of the door.

'The name, sir, you call yourself by,' said I, 'is not the name under which you have sought hospitality in this house before.'

'No, that is true,' he answered coolly; 'the service I am engaged in requires more names than one, and more faces.' He listened, and then went on: 'Hark! I hear the roar of the mob in the street. They are yelling "Jesuit," of course. In their ignorance they have no conception of the true meaning of the word, or of what a Jesuit is. To them 'tis like a red rag to the bull, and stands for everything that is iniquitous and villainous. I am no Jesuit in the right or the wrong sense, but I shall be torn limb from limb for a Jesuit by these infuriated people if you do not hide me, madam. They could not wait for their prey to be imprisoned and sentenced to the gallows in their present temper, but assuredly would execute justice on me themselves. The constable who seeks me in the next house would be powerless

to keep me from their clutches. I do not flatter myself that my escape from the back was not witnessed by someone. Unless I am hid till the search is abandoned I must be taken, drawn and quartered.'

In every word he uttered he appealed more to Laurel than to me, and at last he turned to her and said :

'You remember the aged minstrel at Oxford on whom you took compassion : here stands one far more in need of it. Hide me, for God's sake !'

'Mother,' Laurel said, 'this gentleman says he has been through fire and water to save the King. Let us save him. There is the secret closet behind the bed-head in the velvet room. I will take him thither.'

All this had passed much more quickly than I can write it, and only at that moment did I look at Hugh and note the change which had come over him. He had completely lost his serenity, and was leaning against the platform on which he had stood to put the finishing touches to his dial. His teeth were fiercely set, his fingers clenched, and his eyes darting fire. The agonized expression which his countenance had worn in his fever was there again. Silence put her hand through his uninjured arm, and her head was close to his as she gazed at him anxiously.

Olave had scurried back to old Marie's lap, extremely fearful of the strange intruder on the peace of his nursery kingdom.

'Mother, there is not a moment to be lost,' Laurel cried. 'You know how the closet opens, for you have told me that father showed you on your wedding-day. Come, let us take the gentleman to the velvet room.'

I hesitated still.

'I am not sure,' I said, 'that your father will approve of our harbouring a recusant whilst he is away.'

'Far less would he approve that a man should be dragged from his house to perish at the hands of an angry mob,' she answered with impatience.

'Show me the hiding-place, I beseech and pray you, madam,' the hunted agent exclaimed, casting more of those furtive and listening glances at the door behind him. ''Tis true there is no time to be lost.'

Then 'twas that Hugh leapt forward suddenly and spoke in a voice of passion, which he could scarce control:

'He is my enemy, this man, though I never met him face to face in the field. He took advantage of my weakness from wounds, gotten in honourable warfare, and after cozening and tricking me, he struck

me down from behind and robbed me of a paper which of my own free will I would have yielded up to none but our Generalissimo. When I was sick unto death he deserted me, left me to die like a dog by the way. He has told you that he is a Papal agent, and has made a brag of the service he's rendered to the King; but he has forgot to give you his whole character, and did not say that he was a spy and gamester withal, who doth rook his friends at cards and dice. I say, then, don't hide and shield him from the law; let——'

'Hold, young man!' broke in the other; 'for if I am all you say, I am yet something more—your father!'

Hugh staggered back as if under a blow. He covered his face with his hands and sank on to a settle.

'Would, then, that I had never been born!' he groaned, the fierce storm of wrath and defiance that had so shaken him giving place to an outburst of grief piteous to behold. The pent-up grief of his young lifetime, methought, for the cruel sufferings at the hands of this man, of the forsaken, gentle little mother, who had not lived to nurture him up.

Father and son! Could it be? Nay; could it not be? So alike and yet so different were those two ashen faces that had confronted each other in

anger. The curious tawny tint and the waviness of the hair—Hugh's had grown again in his fever—the set of the eyebrows, even to the peculiarity of one being slightly thicker than the other; the pose of the head—all these were alike. But how unlike the expression of the eyes, the shape of the chin, and curve of the lips!

Father and son! and betwixt them a bitter enmity sprung up ere the relationship was known to the son, and not to be quenched the instant 'twas revealed.

The absorbing thought that a life was in peril, a life she might help to save, belike deadened the shock of this revelation to Laurel. I could scarce believe that she had heard or understood it when she went running to the green-velvet chamber, and, flying back in a twinkling, exclaimed:

'Mother, mother! come at once and open the closet. Prithee, come! I have looked from the window into the Lane, and the officers are come forth from the next house. The mob is surging round them, and clamours and roars for its victim. Any moment they may be coming this way.'

And again she turned to go, motioning me and Hugh's father to follow her. Ere he left the nursery he looked back at his son.

'He to whom I gave life is mighty desirous I should lose it. Filial gratitude!' he sneered.

Hugh made no rejoinder, and kept his head bowed in his hand. Silence was on her knees beside him, sobbing and pressing her cheek against his shoulder. Her wondrous dumb devotion would fain make amends to him for that love of parents he had never known.

‘Begone, wicked man, ugly man!’ cried little Olave, seating himself erect on Marie’s lap. ‘You’ve made Hugh cry, and Silence cry, and Olave cry. Fie! begone!’ and he burst out a-weeping, swept by the emotions of his elders, beyond the comprehension, but not the sympathy, of his baby soul.

‘Ne pleure pas, ne pleure pas, mon ange,’ crooned Marie. ‘Maman shall lock up méchant monsieur in a cupboard dark.’

‘Even the lips of babes and hags curse me,’ he said, with a scoffing smile. ‘Now, then, madam, to the “cupboard dark.”’

I felt an unwillingness still, nigh to disgust, at hiding the man, till I looked down from the window where Laurel was stationed, in the velvet room, and then I realized, as I had not done before, the danger and horror of his position. I saw the crowd gathered in front of the next house, swaying to and fro, waving cudgels, and hurling stones at the windows, even threatening the constables, who they thought had let the object of their hate and

indignation escape. Terrible indeed to be so hated—to have excited that mad fury which, 'tis said, can transform ordinary peaceable beings into wild beasts. Their yells, howls, and execrations filled the air, and as I looked down on the sea of agitated heads, and caught sight of women's faces, scowling and brutal as those of the men, I wondered how 'twas that in more ordinary times one never met with such faces in the streets of London. Only in tumults like this, or at an execution on Tower Hill, did they come to the surface. Where had they lain hid every day? or was it indeed true that the everyday aspect of these shouting, leaping fiends was placid and indifferent? The constables, who were armed, stood above the crowd, on the steps of the portico, seeming engaged in a consultation as to whether 'twere advisable to search the Gray House. Then they moved, and the whole mob, facing about, moved too, and 'twas in our direction.

I ran and knelt down, my fingers feeling for the spring that opened the secret door behind the head of the bed—the bed whereon Hugh had tossed night after night, and fought again at Naseby in his delirium, and struggled with the mysterious foe we now knew to have been his father—the man who cowered by me like a hunted fox watching to dart into its hole.

Since Gabriel had shown me, when he brought me home on my bridal day, the trick by which the invisible door in the panels opened, I had not tried it, and so at this emergency I fumbled for the spring in vain. I couldn't light on it.

'Mother, make haste!' Laurel called from her post. 'The steward has let the constables pass the gatehouse. Why are you so slow?'

'I have forgot how to open the closet,' I said.

She gave a cry of dismay, and the man, in his desperation and abject fear, which he could no longer conceal by bravado, pushed me roughly aside, and, going on his knees, fumbled himself for the spring.

Above the chorus of inarticulate howls the mob kept up without the gatehouse distinct detached cries reached our ears, and a voice of higher pitch than the rest shouting: 'Bring him forth, the Papist agent of the Pope, the traitor who would have the King bribe the Irish monsters and murderers! Bring him forth! Likely 'tis he lies in this house—the house of one who is a malignant for certain, or why has he foreign Papists amongst his servants?'

A new fear on behalf of Juan and Alphonse flashed through me. What if they should show themselves, and be seized by these infuriated bigots, who held my husband to be a malignant because he employed them!

The cause of their rage and excitement was now hammering and beating the panels with his fists, murmuring oaths, and vowing that he believed I had tricked and deceived him, and that there was no secret door in the wall.

Laurel, meanwhile, to gain time, went out to parley with the constables. I, taking her place at the window, saw her advance into the courtyard to meet them. As I write this, the picture comes before my eyes of her standing fearlessly on the flagstones, in full view of the angry people at our gates. She was perfectly at her ease and collected, at which I marvelled, for within the house she had been flitting hither and thither in wild agitation. With a stately grace she stood there, showing the beautiful curve of her wrist and arm, bare to the elbow beneath the lace of her sleeve. As she held back the long, straight folds of her dark satin gown, the chill wind played with her hair, and stirred the edges of the point-lace on her shoulders. Not brighter than her flashing eyes were the precious stones in the clasp of her stomacher. Her young beauty, her commanding carriage, the clear, penetrating sweetness of her tones, as she spoke to the officers of the law, seemed to produce a lull in the clamour of the crowd. They ceased hooting, to gape and listen.

‘The person whom you say that you have a warrant to arrest,’ said she, quite coolly, ‘was in this house, but has now left it. It will only waste your time to search for him.’

‘You must inform us when and how he left it.’

‘Nay, that I cannot, as I do not know. Maybe he has taken refuge in Fulford’s Rents, in Holborn, where debtors and criminals are said to be safe.’

‘He would have been seen crossing the street.’

‘Belike he knew of some private passage thither.’

‘Under the ground?’

‘’Tis probable enough,’ Laurel answered, un-daunted.

‘Fulford’s Rents!’ passed from lip to lip through the crowd. The narrow court, closed by a gate at one end, is as notorious a sanctuary of debtors, thieves, and all who would fain escape the eye of justice as are Whitefriars and the Savoy; but whether it would be equally safe from the law of the mob is another question.

‘Why should you suspect us of hiding this man?’ Laurel continued. ‘My father, who is absent, is no malignant, as you call it. The man is as hateful to me as to yonder mob—but for other reasons, ’tis true. I hate him because he misused and deserted his wife, and hath cruelly injured his only child. I hate him for his base cheating and lies. But you, on account

of these things, would not touch him. His sin in yours and those maddened people's eyes is his religion.'

My heart was in my throat as I leaned anxiously over the casement and heard her speak thus. Surely, I thought, such a speech as her last would excite the suspicion she had begun by allaying, and every moment I expected to see the constables pass her and force their entry. She herself told me afterwards she had never any hope that she could deter them from their purpose, and had only talked to detain them so long as 'twere possible, trusting that it would give time for the fugitive to hap on the spring of the secret door which I had failed to find.

Laurel's surprise, then, was as great as mine when suddenly, with a roar of 'to Fulford's Rents,' the crowd, like a pack of hounds, turned tail towards Holborn, this time giving the constables the lead instead of taking it from them.

Would they come back? For some minutes Laurel still stood in her proud attitude on the flagstones, as if she half expected they would.

'Your peril is averted for the present, sir,' I said, turning from the window; 'your pursuers are gone.'

But I spoke to the green velvet hangings. There was no figure grovelling 'twixt the bed-head and the panels; the room was empty. Whilst I had

been looking out, straining my ears to catch Laurel's words, the spring must have been touched by hazard, the door have sprung back and closed again on Mr. l'Estrange.

That night Hugh made his bundle, and left us for Master Haynes'. He had never gone from the Gray House with so white and anguish-stricken a face, and 'twas enough to make other hearts than Silence's bleed to look on't. He took his usual respectful farewell of me, and, though he did not say so, I understood that the roof of his benefactor could not shelter him and his father withal at the same time.

How many hours it sheltered Mr. l'Estrange is not known. We knocked several times on the panels behind the bed and no answer came. At nightfall, as still neither I nor Laurel could discover how to open the secret door, we knocked again, and placed meat, bread, and wine there.

On the morrow when Gabriel came home he opened the closet, but there was no one in it, and Mr. l'Estrange had evidently found his way out by the staircase that leads from it into an underground passage skirting the garden wall.

He had left a piece of burnt cork and a letter on the little table beneath the hanging lamp in the closet. Writing materials must have been concealed

about his person, otherwise the letter could not have been writ, although 'twas only the address, 'tis true, that was in his handwriting—but the address was long.

'For that intrepid, fair King's woman, Mistress Laurel Young, who this day, realizing that a fellow-Royalist stood in danger of a vile death at the hands of a fanatical mob, did nobly exert herself to save him, I do leave behind the missives herein enclosed to acquaint her with a danger that threatened herself, but threatens her no longer, in that I who would have been the chief instrument therein, should I now succeed in making my escape by the river, withdraw beyond seas to serve again in the army of the Catholic Duke of Lorraine.'

The enclosures, to my shame and grief, were in the hand of my brother Roger. They gave the clue to his true connection with the so-called Mr. Taller, to whom he had lost large sums of money at cards and betting at bowls. To pay these debts he was, by Mr. Taller's aid, to carry off an heiress by force and stealth, and the heiress was to be none other than Laurel, whom, if he could not win by fair means, he was determined to get by foul. And as if this enormity were not enough, these letters of Roger's contained evidence of another design on the part of his confederate, who, having satisfied himself

that Hugh was the son he had abandoned even before his birth, and having observed Silence's passionate attachment to her foster-brother, would have plotted to decoy both of them into the Fleet, where, perforce, he had at times to take up his abode, and there get them tied in wedlock by some chaplain, according to a custom of the place.

Thus had he schemed to profit eventually by the fortunes of both Gabriel's daughters, and would not have scrupled outrageously to wrong one he knew to have stood in the place of a father to his own son.

I should be too shamed to write of my brother's share in these perfidious plottings and underhand dealings, now come to light, anywhere but in the pages of this dear book, which ever seems to invite my confidence when once I open it again after long months of neglect.

In his goodness, my husband, to soothe my sharp distress, tried to find excuses for Roger, though it was indeed difficult. 'Twas clear, he said, Roger had but writ of this audacious project, and had taken no steps to bring it to pass, for all the while he had been doing his duty as a soldier, and had fought bravely in the King's last stand at Naseby. Evil company had been Roger's bane, and doubtless he had been led on by the spy and gamester, into whose power he had fallen through losing money to him at

cards, to talk bigly of a plan which the obligations of honour and affection would have prevented his putting into execution, even if it had been possible.

‘Honour and affection!’ I exclaimed bitterly; ‘I fear he has neither, but hath lost both at cards, like his money.’

But Mr. l’Estrange’s conduct Gabriel found no palliation for. Never have I seen him so deeply stirred to wrathful indignation as he was on learning what had passed in his absence, and that Mr. Taller had duped him, and proved one and the same person as Hugh’s father.

‘And base scoundrels of this type still flourish darkly in the pay and service of the King’s party,’ he said, ‘whilst the flower of England’s chivalry, which graced the ranks of his army at the outset, has all been swept away.’

‘Not all, not all!’ Laurel cried. ‘Thank God, I know of one—nay, of many, for that matter—who have yet noble lives to risk above board and in the daylight for their King.’

When Laurel took her lute (for the first time since that, to us, eventful January day on which Hugh had departed so suddenly and sadly) and sat on the settle to tune it in the ruddy glow of the blazing hearth, methought she had in her memory only ‘one,’

not 'many,' who had yet a noble life to lay down ;
for the lines she sang, with an unwonted dewiness in
her brown eyes and a vibrating sweet pathos in her
voice, were these, writ by Colonel Lovelace :

' Though seas and lands betwixt us both,
 Our faith and troth,
 Like separated souls,
 All time and space controls ;
Above the highest sphere we meet,
Unseen, unknown, we greet as angels greet.

' So then we do anticipate
 Our after fate,
 And are alive, in the skies,
 If thus our lips and eyes
Can speak like spirits unconfined,
In heaven, their earthly bodies left behind.'

XI

CHANCERY LANE,
July 30, 1647.

I WAS in the still-room this morning, helping my women to make a cordial of briar-rose leaves, when I saw Laurel coming over the daisied grass of Lincoln's Inn Fields in the golden sunshine. She came so quickly that Mr. Fanshawe's negro man, who was her attendant, could scarce keep pace with her.

The Fanshawes are lodged at present in Portugal Row. At the end of the war, when Royalists poured into London to compound for their estates with a committee of the Parliament sitting for that purpose in Goldsmiths' Hall, to our unspeakable delight my husband's dear kinswoman did journey hither from Caen in France, to compound for part of her fortune, and succeeded in getting a pass for Mr. Fanshawe from Colonel Copley, a Parliament man. We have enjoyed much of their society through the winter and spring, though when Mr.

Fanshawe joined Anne, to raise money for returning to His Highness the Prince, 'twas necessary for him to live very privately, as he does still, for fear of being imprisoned for his loyalty.

Laurel has been waiting almost daily on her sweet mistress, as she likes to call Anne, and when I saw her speeding over the fields so early to-day I guessed what news she was bringing.

But, of course, Laurel asked me to guess what the news was when she came in laughing, and tossed off the little mask she had worn to protect her face from the sun's glare. For answer, I inquired whether 'twas a boy or a girl.

'Why, mother,' she exclaimed, 'how did you know it was either? Well, 'tis a boy, to take the place of the little first-born son who was buried at Oxford ere he was out of his chrisom robe; and my mistress is overjoyed that her little Nan hath a brother, and wishes she were here to see him, instead of in Jersey, at nurse with my Lady Carteret. He is to be christened Henry, and my father and you are to be gossips, if you will be so pleased, which I warrant you will. They say that the babe hath his mother's eyes, his father's nose, and his grandfather's chin, and is the image of his uncle. But 'tis ridiculous to say new-born infants resemble anyone except each other—in truth, they are all

alike, and I could not have told this one from Olave, or Olave from your sister Peg's boy, at the age of twenty-four hours.' She took up a handful of the rose-leaves which lay in crimson heaps around me, and crumpled them in her palm. 'I would fain give a helping hand to-day at the rose-stillery,' said she, 'but may not tarry after I have seen Silence. They expect me back at Portugal Row by noon.'

'Tis unfortunate you cannot stay to dinner,' I said, 'for your father has invited two guests, who, methinks, come expressly to see you.'

Laurel knew what I meant. She threw down the rose-petals, and took up a bud, which she began to pluck to pieces impatiently. Some of the crowd of delinquents—so called by the rebels who flock to London just now to compound for their estates—are improving the occasion by heiress-hunting.

'Is it the widower-knight, Sir Pompey Staines, who would endow me with four strapping step-daughters—even a worse fate than yours, sweet mother?' she inquired; 'or the obedient young esquire who makes a leg, and woos at his father's bidding? or that woeful pedant who turns his compliments in Latin? Or, maybe, 'tis that clownish personage with the gait of a plough-boy, for all his long pedigree; or that spark Sir Guy, whose love-locks are sticky with strong perfume; or—— Nay,

why run through the whole galaxy? 'Tis all the same, whether it be all or none of these. I am sick of being inspected as if I were a piece of china or a picture on view. Once I scarce knew whether I had a mind to be wed or no. But now 'tis different. I am confident that I never wish to wed with any. So 'tis useless for my father to consider these people's proposals to treat for me. Why must parents be so anxious to dispose of their daughters, I wonder?'

'They are not anxious to be rid of them,' I made answer; 'but the more they prize them, the more they would fain confide them to the care and protection of suitable husbands, for 'tis natural for every woman, whether of high or low degree, to marry, unless there be some special reason against it.'

'Then I give thee leave, mother to publish that there is a special reason against it in my case,' Laurel declared, laughing, yet, I believe, meaning, withal, what she said. 'I pray you do it if it will spare me the addresses of these gentlemen, old and young, who pester my father with the inventory of their sequestered lands and moneys, and by a list of their ancestors, their good looks, and virtues at the same time. I have been so barely civil to them of late methinks they must have doubts as to whether,

after all, I should grace their board or do them any credit as their lady.'

So saying, she raised her long skirts and danced down the passages, singing a catch as she went; and soon she held Silence in her arms, caressing her, as she is wont to do after a separation, and crooning those soft endearments which Silence understands so well from the motions of her sister's lips.

Laurel, despite her childlike candour and outspokenness at times, does not wear her heart on her sleeve for daws to peck at. 'Tis still, in part, a riddle to me, that warm young heart, though methought I came a little nearer to solving it to-day than heretofore, when I stood watching Laurel step forth into the dazzling sunshine again, with her ebony attendant, to return to Portugal Row. She had not affixed the mask, but carried it in her hand, and I saw her face change as a figure, the most gallant and handsome in London (for, wherever it may be, 'tis always the most gallant and handsome), crossed the sunny street.

'Twas Colonel Lovelace, who had left England to fight in the French wars on the surrender of Oxford last summer, when disaster everywhere befell the shattered remnant of the King's armies and drove them from the field. He had but recently come back to London, and was meditating, I doubt not,

how he might once more draw his sword from the scabbard in some daring service for his King, now a prisoner of the Parliament at Holmby House.

He was attired, according to his wont, in all the gauds of an extreme fashionable Cavalier, which he wears with so extraordinary a grace that he never doth look gaudy. Gay-coloured plumes, lace, velvet, and satin, jewelled buttons, richly-embroidered scarf and flaunting sash, on him tone into an unstudied harmony subordinate to the charm and beauty of his person. Methinks 'tis Colonel Lovelace becomes his fine clothes rather than that they become him.

Only few words has Laurel ever exchanged with the soldier-poet. Their meetings have been rare and brief since the first chance encounter long ago on Hampstead heights. Is it, perchance, because the memory of them is so fondly cherished that Laurel said to-day there was a 'special reason' for her distaste to the thought of wedding any of the admirers who would fain treat for her? Her proud nature would disdain to confess it, I know. She respects as something sacred the poet's faithful passion for the unknown Lucasta of his lyrics, and would not dream, even were it possible, of shaking that most wondrous fidelity. 'Tis like her to rest content with adoring in the inner sanctuary of her secret soul a far-off hero, whom she has set on a pedestal therein, not

hoping, nor, belike, even desiring, that he should descend from his pedestal and come nearer to mingle with the ordinary traffic of her everyday life.

Yet how could he—so well accustomed to read adoration for his person behind women's coquettish airs and graces and languishing vapours—how could he mistake the language of those candid brown eyes, shining so softly as they met his gaze? A maiden's reserve cannot extend to her eyes, for they are the windows through which her heart peeps out, whether she will or no, at certain unguarded moments. Such a moment was it this morning when Laurel responded to Colonel Lovelace's greeting by the gateway. Not a line of her erect, stately bearing relaxed; her head, held high, did not droop; but her eyes—shall I ever forget the look in her eyes? I felt guilty that I had seen it. I feel guilty now whilst I write of it. Steadfast indeed must be the flame that can be thus kept burning by such scant fuel as an occasional smile and greeting.

August 8.

Although there is peace, men feel little security of its being lasting. Distractions still continue, the conquerors being so sorely divided among themselves. The army refused to be disbanded in June, and defies the Parliament; and even the army itself is torn by factions, the party called Levellers having done their

best to stir up a mutiny within it. He will have to be a bold and wary man, my Sir Oracle says, who attempts a settlement 'twixt all these divers and contending forces.

'Tis difficult even for those living in the heart of the turmoil to follow and understand the fluctuations of London's varying moods. It seems but a short time ago that the citizens shouted with one voice for liberty, and poured out their money and treasure to support the Parliament and defend the city, and sent forth its youths by thousands to give their blood for the cause, the triumph of which they held to be so vital for the country's welfare. Yet now that it has triumphed seething currents of restlessness and jealous discontent are at work, pulling men this way and that. The other day, when shops were closed and drums beating along the streets, and the Militia were called out again, 'twas not to acclaim the great army that had so completely vanquished the Royalists and gained the day, but to oppose its entry with anger and defiance. There was a conspiracy hatched in private by the citizens and prentices to turn and rend their own powerful creation. But when the army approached and, perforce, threatened London—the London that had sent it forth with blessings and tears of enthusiasm—active hostility died and gave place to sullen acquiescence.

The potent, conquering army, that had now 'added a bloodless victory over its friends to the many sanguinary ones it had scored over its foes, marched from the westward through London to the Tower, and Gabriel and I looked down on its serried ranks from Master Haynes' latticed bays in Cheapside; for it chanced that the dialler had invited us thither at that very hour to hold a colloquy about Hugh l'Estrange.

If I could not help being stirred at the sight of these regiments of foot and horse filing by, what must Hugh have felt, who had marched with them through winter rains and snow and summer heat, and fought and bivouacked with them on many a blood-stained field? He stood below on the flags with the other prentices, saluting the Generals with his maimed hand as they passed, his eyes agleam, though he did not huzza and shout with the rest of the spectators.

No Cavalier ever sat his horse more gracefully than the Lord General Fairfax, or wore his armour with more perfect ease. He glanced up as he passed, and I saw how the beauty of his delicate dark face had been marred by sword slashes. Very different, thought I, was his great comrade in arms, General Cromwell, riding at the head of his Ironsides, with his slouching shoulders, mud-coloured hair, and uncomely features.

Yet I looked at him with awe, for Master Haynes, peering through his large spectacles over my shoulder, said:

‘There goes the man of greatest power and force in the kingdom at this hour. He holds the destiny of King and people in his hands.’

The destiny of the King! Alack! who can say what that may prove to be, when His Majesty is a prisoner of the army which hath to-day trampled down all opposition and ground London beneath its iron heel—the army to which the King himself paid an involuntary compliment when Cornet Joyce’s troop went to Holmby House to seize him.

‘What commission have I?’ said the Cornet. ‘This’—and he pointed to the doughty mounted soldiers drawn up behind him.

‘As fair a commission,’ replied the King, ‘as ever I saw. Such a company of proper, handsome men as I have not seen a great while.’

A true enough description, methinks, of the horsemen we watched curvetting along Cheapside this forenoon. Those sons of Anak, bronzed, straight, and muscular, hardened and seasoned by skilled warfare as the chargers they rid on, worthy to be compared with the hardy legions that were the glory of old Rome, Gabriel said. And when the last were out of sight, and the fierce beams of the sun beat on the empty street, turning the dust raised by the

horses' hoofs to clouds of brass, Hugh still stood gazing wistfully at the turn where they had disappeared, his fellow prentices having run back again into the workshop.

Master Haynes is a strange mixture of superstition and shrewdness. After he had talked at length of the mock suns which had made their appearance in the King's horoscope since 1644, and what these augured, he struck into the subject of Hugh's future.

It seems that, among all his workers, Hugh has the highest principle of honour, the clearest mathematical head, the most fertile invention, and these are the qualities Master Haynes would wish him who succeeds him one day in his business to possess.

'With his guardian's sanction,' said he, 'I am willing to betroth him to my daughter. Ere he went to the wars, to excite peaceful emulation amongst the lads, I offered a prize for the most ingenious mathematical toy, dial, clock, compass, or suchlike, to be designed and fashioned in their private hours. He, despite a wounded arm and injured hand, has constructed something that I hold to be a wonder of skill and ingenuity. 'Tis not only clock and dial combined, but musical instrument as well. Most unquestionably he, and he alone, is deserving of the prize, and I shall have rare pleasure in awarding him, in due time, his guerdon, my

pretty, pious daughter—that is to say, not without your consents, dear sir and madam.’

I remembered how, when Hugh had first made mention to us of the prize offered by Master Haynes, Laurel had asked jestingly if it were to be Mistress Margaret. Little had she thought there was aught prophetic in her jest.

’Twas but a formality for Master Haynes to say he wanted my consent. If Gabriel’s was forthcoming, it would matter little whether or no I gave mine. Yet surely I was acquainted with a reason why the plan Master Haynes unfolded so graciously could not be for Hugh’s happiness.

There was no doubt in Master Haynes’ mind that his proposition would be received with favour. He went on to say that he had laid it before Hugh’s kinsfolk on his mother’s side, who were ready to forget and forgive at last the marriage which had been so distasteful to them, and to take Hugh to their bosom if he became affianced to Mistress Margaret Haynes.

On hearing this, Gabriel, seeming much relieved and overjoyed, at once expressed his warm approval, and thanked the dialler for having proved so excellent a friend as well as master to his foster-son.

Then I felt I must speak.

‘You will not decide this,’ said I, ‘without being

certain that they love each other well enough to wed?’

‘No one could see them together and not take them for sweethearts,’ Gabriel answered.

Only twice had he seen Hugh in Mistress Margaret’s company: first, on the day at the beginning of the war when they had stood side by side in the crowd gathered in front of the Guildhall to listen to the Puritan Lord Brooke’s fervid eloquence; and a second time on that summer evening when we had chanced to come on them after their toiling at the fortifications. In such moments of high enthusiasm and urgency those who were of a like mind were drawn so closely to one another by the bond of their patriotic inclinations that they might easily be mistaken for lovers when they were nothing of the kind.

I knew not how to explain this, so I said, speaking somewhat bluntly in my eagerness:

‘Hugh respects and admires Mistress Margaret—and well he may! But his affections are, or were, set on another.’

For the first time since I married him my husband turned on me a stern and nigh angry look.

‘Another? Whom can you mean?’

‘Your daughter Laurel,’ I answered.

‘Twas bold to say it, for Laurel’s price to Gabriel

is above rubies, and though he is anxious she should be happily wed and settled, especially since my brother Roger's scandalous schemings came to light, he deems none who have entered the lists worthy to win her.

'I have too good an opinion of the youth's modesty and gratitude,' said he, 'to credit that he would repay me for having bred him up as the brother of my children by presuming to think of either as aught but his foster-sister.'

Nor had my words shaken Master Haynes in his belief that Hugh, like every other young man who came under his roof, must prefer pretty Mistress Margaret to all other maidens.

'See, we may take this as a proof,' said he, drawing a sheet of paper from a portfolio. 'Hereon are two mottoes. One is the favourite of Mistress Laurel, and in her handwriting. The other is writ by my daughter, and is from the Scriptures. 'Twixt the two Master Hugh's choice wavered, but which do you think stands at last graven on his ingenious piece of work? Not "*Le temps s'en va, le temps s'en va. Hélas; le temps, non, mais nous en allons,*" madam, but "*The darkness and the light are both alike to Thee.*"'

Whether 'twas proof or not, I said no more, for I could not betray Hugh's confidence, and it may be

that Hugh, after all, has learnt the expediency of following the old London fashion, common enough, which is that the most skilled and trusty apprentice should woo his master's daughter, and succeed him at his death. Yet, methinks, I would rather he had been faithful, even in vain, than prudent.

Laurel is like to resent the betrothal should it come to pass, of Hugh and Mistress Margaret, I fear, for Silence's sake. Only the other day she said playfully that when Hugh and Silence were wed she should like them to live in the little house in Holborn, next to the one Mr. Milton has lately come to from the Barbican with his fair wife, with whom he has long since become reconciled.

October 2.

On August 24 the King was brought, a prisoner of the army, to his fair palace of Hampton Court, where, in his father's time, he took part in so many splendid pageants and state entertainments, and where, later in his own reign, he hath passed days of happy, innocent diversion with his Queen and children.

His Majesty's manner of life has been freer and pleasanter here than when he was in the hands of the Scots, and afterwards of the Parliament. He is now more of a guarded and attended Prince than a

conquered and purchased captive. The chiefs of the army show him courteous respect, and have permitted his intimate and faithful followers, Lord Ashburnham and Sir John Berkeley, to return from beyond seas to be about his person. He enjoys—what was denied him at Holmby House—the consolation of his own spiritual advisers, instead of being preached at by Roundhead ranters, and his children, the sweet Princess Elizabeth, and the young Dukes of York and Gloucester, come from Syon House to visit him.

The King dines publicly in state, and any gentlemen who wish are admitted afterwards to kiss his hand in the Presence Chamber. All his old servants and Cavaliers who served him in the wars have free access to His Majesty, and Mr. Fanshawe has been much with him, Anne having borne her husband company twice to pay her respects to the King, she being daughter and wife of two of His Majesty's most loyal and devoted servants.

'Tis little to be wondered at that those who have ever been attached to the King's service should take advantage of this opportunity of flocking to Hampton Court; but what seems strange is that the river should be crowded daily with barges and wherries bearing freights of the citizens thither. Belike this marks the slow turning of the tide, the beginning of

the reaction, which my Sir Oracle foretold on our wedding-day, when the city streets were lined with lowering faces, and no one smiled or called 'Huzza!' as the King came forth from the Guildhall to his coach. That was the King's last appearance in the City, and as I look back to that day across the years of my married life, extraordinary seem the public changes and events that have been crowded into them, and there pass before me like a procession the divers men of mark, and the young lives of promise that within that time have either ended in their beds, from natural distempers, or met a violent and bloody end on the scaffold and the battlefield.

A fortnight or more ago we took Olave to see the harvest carried in the meadows round the Grange at Kingston, and then heard much of how the Royal prisoner passes his time. He plays tennis and hunts, and our kinswoman at the Grange has met His Majesty in the park, reading as he walked to the gentleman attending him, from some theological book. One day lately he rid as far as the Grange, and drew rein and dismounted to watch a while the harvesters at their toil. But he had soon looked beyond them, over the waving gold of the corn, to the blue line of Surrey hills, with pensive, melancholy eyes.

'Would that he'd come again to-day,' Laurel had

said, 'to see the wenches and lads at their harvest junketings. Our little Viking should go on his knees and pay him homage.'

But the King did not come, and Laurel must needs be satisfied with having the spot pointed out where the King had rested. She went to it, leading Olave by the hand, and told him that this was the ground his King had stood on, and those the fields and hills his eyes had contemplated but a few days ago.

Olave gazed solemnly, first at the ground, then at the distant blue hills, melting into the deeper blue of the sky, and lastly into Laurel's face. Then the bagpipes struck up in the barn, and his gravity gave way. The weird strains of the bagpipe were new to his ears, my little son having lived his short life altogether under the Puritan régime, which has banished musicians, puppet-shows, and mountebanks from the London streets, and has made it a penal offence to sing, dance, or even laugh in them. He began acapering and clapping of his hands, and shouted 'God save the King!' so lustily that I looked round in alarm lest any of the guards from the army's headquarters at Putney should be patrolling the lanes and hear him.

Before going back to London, we took barge and drifted up the river till the lights beneath the silver globe of the full moon twinkled at us from the long

front of Cardinal Wolsey's palace. We saw figures pass and repass the windows, and heard the neighing and champing of war-horses in the paved stable-yard.

'To-night the King is entertaining his captors, the Generals Cromwell, Ireton, and Whalley, with their wives,' Gabriel said. 'His Majesty is, I'll warrant, all graciousness to homely Mistress Cromwell, who 'twas his express desire should be presented to him. The austere Roundhead soldiery, 'tis said, is thawing fast in the sunshine of royal smiles.'

'Methinks General Cromwell is only hiding some dark design,' Laurel said, 'beneath this seeming friendliness and consideration towards the King.'

'And others think that the King is not sincere in his ready acceptance thereof,' my husband answered: 'that he would play one party off against the other, for 'tis on the widening of the breach 'twixt Presbyterians and Independents that he now builds high hopes of regaining his crown.'

'The King still wears his crown by right Divine. The rebels, whatever they choose to call themselves, Puritans, Independents, Republicans, or Levellers, cannot give him back what they haven't the power to take away,' Laurel said hotly, as strong in her faith in the Divine right of monarchs as the King himself.

Olave's head was pillowed on my lap, and I had thought he slept, but now he opened his drowsy blue eyes, and again looking at Laurel, he exclaimed: 'God save the King!'

This evening our dear cousins and friends the Fanshaws came from Portugal Row to sup with us. They start to-morrow for Portsmouth to take ship for France.

Whilst Sir Oracle and Mr. Fanshawe were in the study comparing their translations of an Ode of Horace, which they both deem to be untranslatable, yet cannot forbear to attempt, Anne came upstairs with me to my carnation closet. She took up this book, which lay, in company with Master Crashaw's and Master Vaughan's Poems and holy Bishop Andrewes' 'Devotions,' on the bureau, and turning over the blank pages she counted them, and chid me for writing in my journal with so little regularity.

'Tis gradually becoming an annual rather than a journal,' she said.

'But I have had no travels and adventures such as yours when you were plundered and near cast away on the islands of Scilly,' said I. 'We stay-at-homes lead less romantic lives. Would you have me write of each time I go out to pull herbs, or to the Exchange to choose a riband, or keep count of every brew of herb tea, cowslip wine, and rose cordial, and of all

the pickled cloves and flummery caudles the still-room maids make or mar? I never meant my journal to be a book of recipes and prosy household matters.'

'Neither can you have meant it to be a family chronicle,' she replied, 'else you certainly would have recorded on some of these blank pages, under 1645 and 1646, your father, dear Master Howard's marriage with Mistress Travers, and pretty Prue's.'

At the time they happened both these events had caused me some pain, though 'twas nothing compared with my distress at the disclosure of Roger's perfidy. Now I can but admit that my father's second marriage has been for the best. His wife's fortune, if not large, is comfortable, and her influence with the Aldermen and City folks has helped to procure my father a post as teacher of singing at Gresham College. Madam has not conquered, 'tis true, Jane's obstinate aversion to a stepmother, and Prue declares 'tis because home was so different and she was no longer wanted there that she made her runaway match with a nigh penniless pupil, who long ago fell in love with Prue's performance of Dr. Bull's famous fantasy for the harpsicon, with thirty variations so intricate that even Prue's skilled little fingers could never master more than twenty-four of them. Having incurred her stepmother's high displeasure by such a foolish marriage, Prue and her husband found them-

selves soon afterwards in debt and in the Fleet, and, methinks, had Gabriel not been willing and able to help them out, they would be there at this moment.

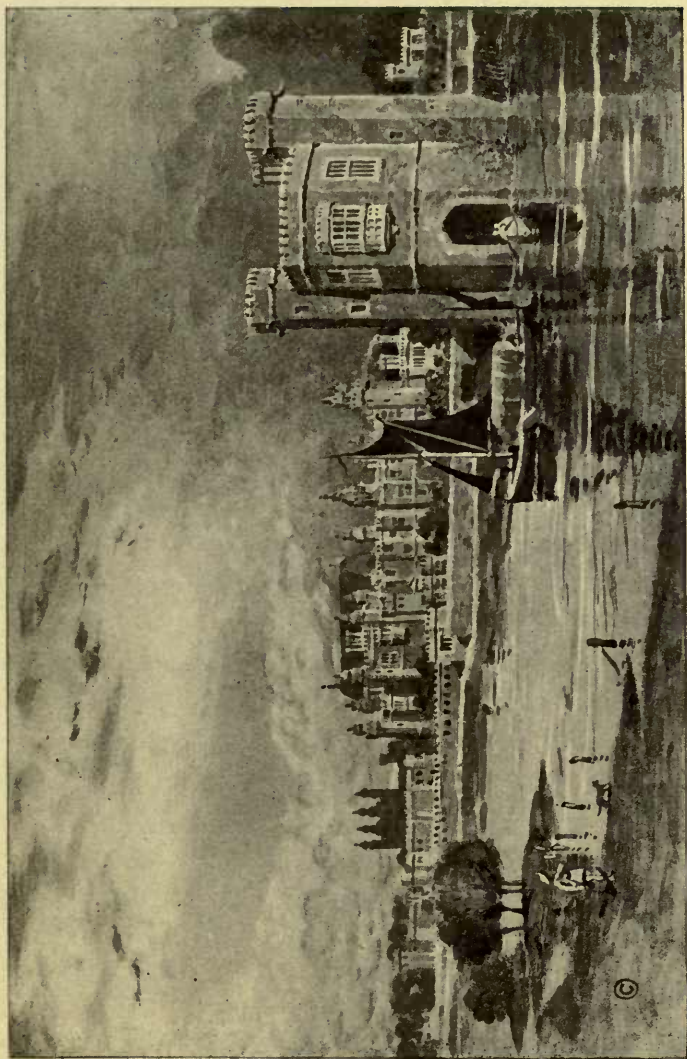
Anne, fearing she had offended me by referring to unpleasant subjects, put my day-book back again in its place by Master Vaughan, and then drew me down beside her on the hearth, holding my hands affectionately in hers.

'Dear Lovejoy, I understand,' said she. 'Tis not tittle-tattle, but of history and fine things you would fain write in your book when the spirit moves you, and if the spirit doesn't move you, you would rather leave it alone. Dick is the same. He can only write fluently when he is inspired withal. Do you know the King has read his "Pastor Fido," and thinks Sir John Denham's prefatory lines of praise richly deserved? We took our farewells of His Majesty yesterday at Hampton Court. Let me tell you about that most pathetic scene, and I am sure you will be moved to write it ere you lay yourself abed. I, for my part, shall wait to write the story of my life till I am an old woman, and then, belike, I shall ask the loan of your day-book, Lovejoy, to freshen my memory, though, methinks, much is already engraven thereon so clearly that it can never fade.'

An old woman! Could she ever grow old, this winsome, fair creature, to whose lively, girlish spirits wifehood and maternity had but added a new and softening charm?

‘The King is more strictly guarded than he has been,’ she continued, ‘His Majesty having seen fit to withdraw his parole to the Generals. We were with him near an hour in the room called Paradise, and he talked much to us of his concerns, and was pleased to give my husband credentials for Spain, with private instructions. When it came to parting, I could not refrain from weeping, as he saluted me. I prayed to God to preserve his Majesty with long life and happy years. He stroked me on the cheek, and said: “Child, if God pleaseth, it shall be so; but both you and I must submit to God’s will, and you know in what hands I am.” Then he turned to my husband, and said: “Be sure, Dick, to tell my son all that I have said, and deliver those letters to my wife. Pray God bless her! I hope I shall do well.” And, taking Dick in his arms, he did add: “Thou hast ever been an honest man, and I hope God will bless thee, and make thee a happy servant to my son, whom I have charged in my letter to continue his love and trust to you.”’

The tears which had been gathering fast in her round, childlike eyes rained down, and her voice



HAMPTON COURT IN THE DAYS OF CHARLES I.

was choked. I have many visions of my dear girlhood's friend limned on my mind since the earliest, when I saw her for the first time, a restless, small elf of a maid, taking her lesson from my father on the virginals in Hart Street. But should we never meet again, I shall see her oftenest, methinks, as she looked to-night, sitting beside me in the firelight, recounting, with streaming eyes, how she and her husband had taken their farewells of the King, and how he had promised that if ever he were 'restored to his dignity' he would 'bountifully reward them both for their service and sufferings.'

After a silence only broken by the soft moaning of the October wind in the chimney, Anne said:

'But Laurel could have told you all this when she comes back to you to-morrow. I let her attend me into the King's presence yesterday on her earnestly petitioning it. Beautiful, loyal Laurel! I shall miss my nightingale, and will not pretend that your sharp-witted Jane can fill her place, glad as I am to have her, dear little soul!'

Jane, to her great joy, hath gained her ambition, and is to escape from her stepmother's government and serve for a time Mistress Fanshawe. She is to go with them to Paris, as young waiting-gentlewoman, a post Laurel has filled for love during her mistress's sojourn in London.

November 12.

All the town is talking of the King's flight at dusk last night from Hampton Court. He was thought to be writing letters in his bedchamber, but when his keeper, General Whalley, went in, he found it empty. The King had left his cloak on the floor, and, with Colonel Legge, was gone by private passage to the riverside. They crossed, and, taking horse, rid away in the storm and darkness toward Oatlands.

In Mr. Peter Lely's studio at his new house in Covent Garden we have seen to-day the portrait for which His Majesty lately sat whilst he was at Hampton Court. Even the hand of his own dear painter, Sir Anthony Van Dyck, can never have portrayed the King's features with a more incomparable skill. 'Tis wondrous fine, full of a most noble dignity and repose. The natural melancholy of his countenance has deepened—as well it may, after all the tossings, tumults, and reverses of these distressful years. Not a King of pomp and state, but a King of sorrows, is the King of Mr. Lely's portrait. In it he wears a Spanish hat and a long, heavy cloak—maybe the very same that, before his flight, he left on the floor of his bedchamber as a legacy to his captors.

The artist told us that his friend, Colonel Love-

lace, had this very morning stood before the picture of his King for a long time entranced, and then taken pen and paper and composed some lines on it.

‘And, to my taste, our fair poet has never writ aught so good,’ Mr. Lely said.

‘There was another portrait here a short time ago,’ he added, smiling at Laurel, ‘which, though very different, seemed equally to enchain his fancy. ’Twas of a certain comely young shepherdess, holding a nosegay. You are likely to know better than I if she, too, inspired his Muse.’

Without looking to see, I was sure Laurel lifted her muff to hide the glowing blush which mantles in her cheek at the mention of only one name.

XII

THE GRANGE,
KINGSTON-ON-THAMES,

July, 1648.

I BROUGHT Silence here, where we have lain since June, in hope that the pure country air and breezes from the river would revive her. But the hope has proved vain. Silence is fading away, and too weak to rise from the little white bed, where she lies all day with her great starlike eyes gazing out through the open casement at the swaying tree-tops and the pale-blue hills.

Laurel and I and old Miriam Fisher keep watch by her in turns, though 'tis difficult to tear Laurel from her darling, even to take an airing in the garden.

This profound lethargy came on Silence in April, after a terrible excitement, one of her old frenzies of passionate jealousy. 'Twas Master Haynes who was the unwitting cause of it when he sent an invitation to Gabriel and me to bring Hugh's foster-sisters to a feast at his house. Silence was charmed to go,

because the festivity was to be in honour of Hugh's invention, and his wonderful dial clock was to be exhibited to the guests. She was in joyous anticipation of seeing Hugh step out from the ranks of his fellow-apprentices, the hero of the day, to receive his prize, having no suspicion, as I had, of what that prize might be.

But 'twas not till we came into the parlour at the sign of the Tortoise that it dawned on me Master Haynes had intended to surprise everybody by making this the occasion of his daughter's betrothal to Hugh l'Estrange.

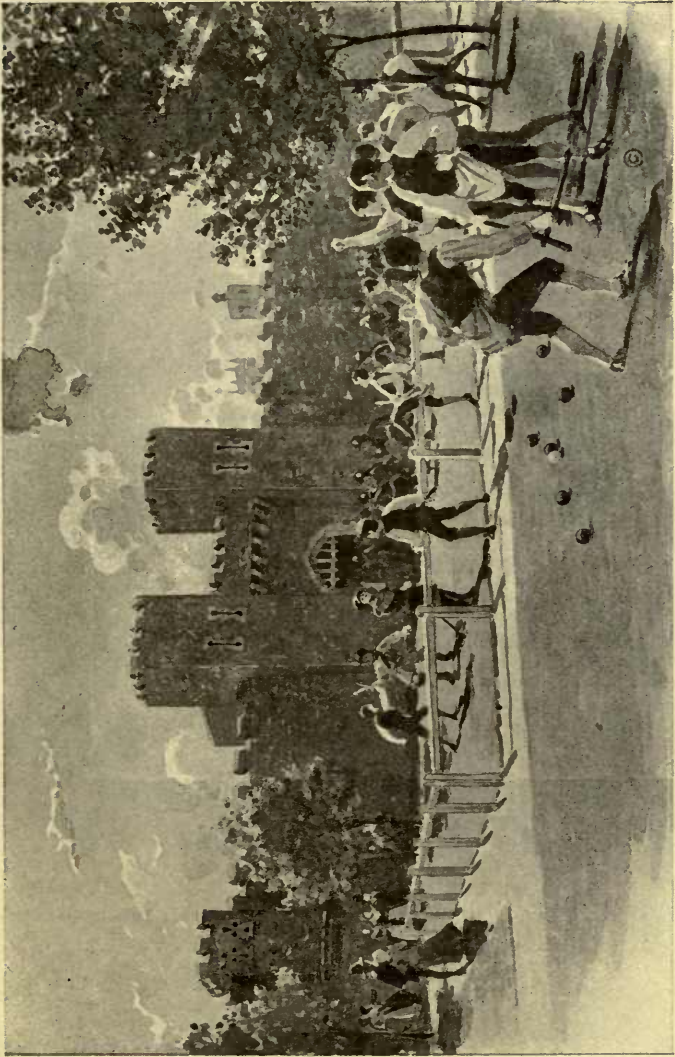
Soft lights shone from sconces on the brown panels, fresh spring flowers and green boughs decked the chimney, and the big round table was spread with snowy napery, a Dutch porcelain service, cut-glass rummers, and pewter dishes, on which were many substantial meats and dainty confections. The guests assembled before we arrived were triumphantly presented to us by our host as Hugh's maternal grandparents, uncles, and aunts. For the most part they were severe, stiff-mannered persons, who had only formal, graceless words of thanks to give Gabriel for having bred up Hugh with his own children, they clearly preferring to regard their kinsman, Master Haynes, as his chief benefactor.

Being bigoted Republicans, they were much

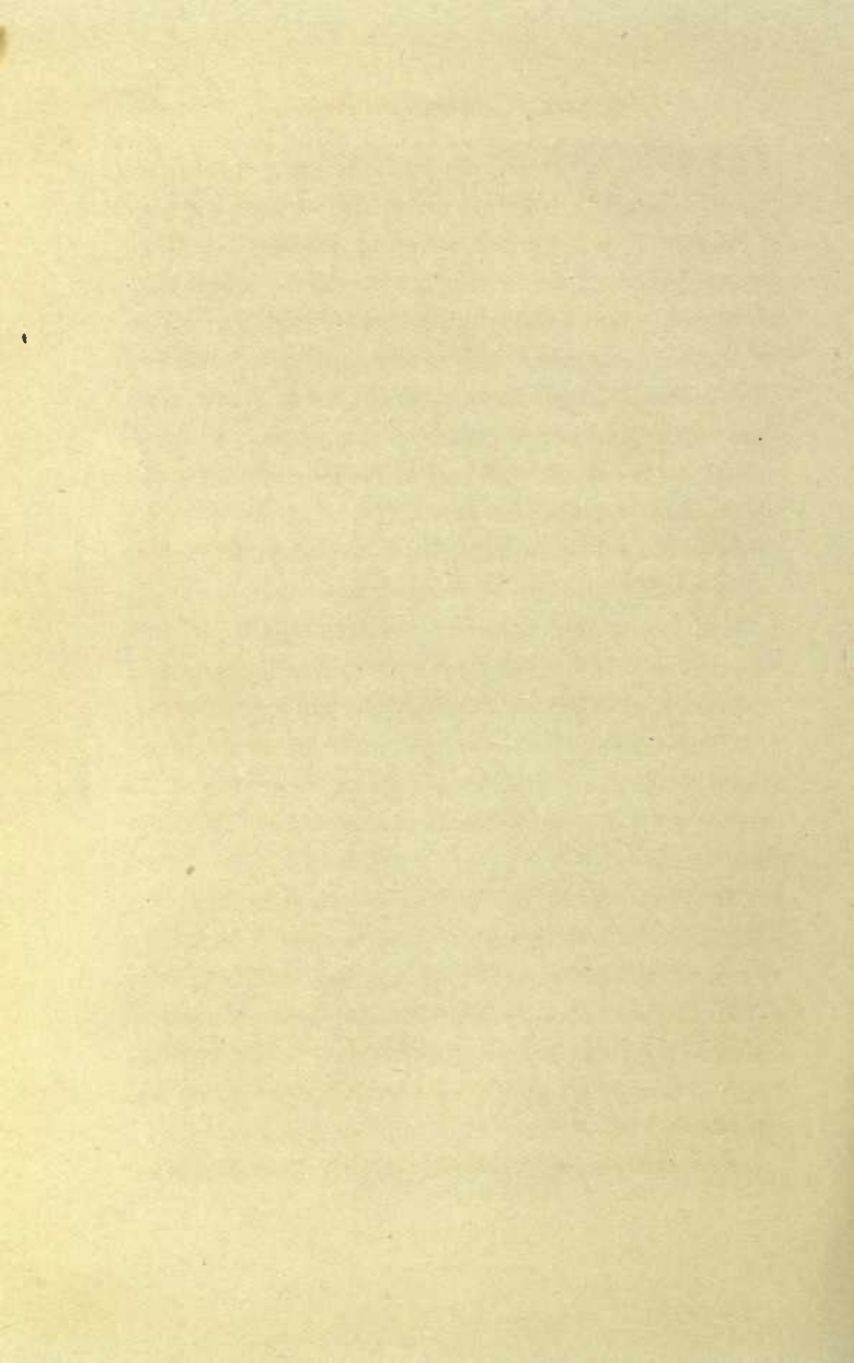
incensed at having had their coach surrounded as they drove from the country into London, by a body of the City Militia, who shouted at them to drink the King's health ; for in April all London's latent loyalty was near to being roused anew by the vote which the Parliament had passed against making any further attempts to treat with the King. The Sunday before that evening at Master Haynes's some prentices who had been playing at bowls in Moorfields drove off the soldiers who tried to stop their game, pursued them through Moorgate, and then marched through the City, raising the cry of ' God and King Charles ! ' Thousands of sympathizers joined them on the way, among them my brother Tim. Sir Oracle says the changes in Tim's politics show pretty accurately which way the wind is blowing in London town.

Master Haynes's Puritan guests could talk of little else but this outrage of being asked to drink the King's health in the public street, till the dishes were cleared and their host invited them to drink in Rhenish wine the health of his daughter Margaret and of their young kinsman Hugh l'Estrange.

I remarked that Mistress Margaret, who was doing the honours of her father's table in her demure and modest fashion, started and turned rosy red at hers and Hugh's name being thus coupled together. Hugh was not present, but his wondrous ingenious piece



'PRENTICES IN MOORFIELDS.



of work was being passed round the table for critical admiration. It had not come to Silence's turn to examine it, but she was watching intently the faces around her to read their opinion. She noticed that everyone who took the dial in his hand bent over it in a listening attitude with exclamations of delight and astonishment, and so she learned for the first time that Hugh's invention produced some kind of music—music for which, though no Puritan, she felt a strange, jealous hatred, because she could not hear it. The colour flamed up in her pale, transparent cheek, her eyes dilated, and she clenched her hands.

The old dialler, beaming benignantly through his spectacles, called his daughter to come and stand beside his high-backed, carven chair. Mistress Margaret obeyed with downcast lashes and a hesitating step, whilst her father commanded a servant to summon Master l'Estrange from the workshop.

Hugh, as he entered the room, bowed to the whole company, but methought his eyes leapt instantly to Laurel, as if he saw no one but her. It happened that at that moment the dial had been handed to Laurel, and her head was bent over it, her red lips parted in wonder at its minute and ingenious workmanship.

'Come forward, Hugh l'Estrange,' Master Haynes

said ; ‘ you have long known that ’tis a mathematical toy of your fashioning which hath gained the prize, but I have refrained from awarding it till a ripe and favourable opportunity offered itself. I hold this to be such an opportunity, inasmuch as your mother’s kindred have assembled here at my table to assure you that the past is forgot, and that by-gones shall be by-gones. In their presence, and in that of the scholarly and generous gentleman, your guardian, who bound you apprentice to me, and who has honoured me by sitting at my board to-day with his lady and fair daughters, I do bestow on you my daughter’s hand.’

The little figure in dove-colour beside his chair shrank away, and Hugh did not advance.

‘ Tut, tut !’ exclaimed Master Haynes ; ‘ why so shy ? Is the hand that is recovered enough of its hurts to do such clever work not able to grasp these small white fingers ?’

Hugh appeared like one stunned or in a dream. In truth, ’twas a moment for him that required courage—a higher courage, maybe, than it had needed to stand amidst the cannon’s roar and the clash of steel on Newbury plain, or to rush into the thick of Naseby’s bloody fight.

How could he refuse this supreme favour from his revered master ? How seem to act so churlishly to

the pretty Puritan maiden as to decline to take her hand? Yet how could he accept, I asked myself, in the sight of one he loved and of another who loved him?

Master Haynes, for all his shrewdness, methought had been blind, and in not preparing them beforehand had placed the two he would have brought together in a cruel situation. To poor Silence, what she saw was agony, and her wild, passionate soul, that had for long crouched submissively behind the barriers of her dumbness, now rose, of a sudden, in hot and uncontrollable rebellion. Unfortunately, Laurel had passed the dial to Silence across the table, and she was holding it in her lap just as Master Haynes drew shrinking Mistress Margaret from behind his chair, and gave her a playful push towards Hugh. Silence, shaken in every limb by the violence of her speechless emotions, crushed Hugh's handicraft in both her hands, hurled it from her with her whole strength, and then fled from the room, Laurel, in dismay, following her. The dial struck the wall a few inches above Mistress Margaret's head, and the delicate mechanism of its interior fell shattered on the corner of the hearthstone.

It all happened in a flash, and the consternation and bewilderment of the company were so great that

one and all rose to their feet, while Gabriel gave the best explanation he could of his poor child's infirmity, saying it made her liable at times to inexplicable outbursts of passion. The scene comes before me now as I write—the horrified faces of the Puritan guests; Master Haynes in his flowing gown and scarlet skull-cap, the sly twinkle gone entirely from his eyes; Hugh looking ruefully at his wrecked masterpiece; Mistress Margaret, despite her narrow escape, no longer shrinking and timid, but standing, brave and erect, in the middle of the room, casting the oil of her sweet-toned speech on the troubled waters.

'You were in error, sir,' she said to her father, 'to think that Hugh l'Estrange and I could wed withone another. We are friends in the Lord, and could be nothing dearer, even if'—her voice trembled—'if Hugh did not love his foster-sister.'

'Which of them?' inquired Master Haynes. 'Methinks, if 'tis Mistress Silence, he hath caught a Tartar.'

No wonder that in his irritation and disappointment Master Haynes was somewhat forgetful of his courtesies!

At last Hugh spoke.

'I am most sensible of your bounteous goodness, master,' said he, 'but I am undeserving of it, and

quite unworthy of the fair prize, and, even had I been worthy to receive it, I should have forfeited it now that the work which won it is destroyed.'

Hugh's new-found relations then began to express their chagrin at the turn the affair had taken, and their host to apologize for what he had designed to be a betrothal feast turning out so sorry a fiasco.

'Twas from that night Silence languished. Her anger had soon burnt out, leaving but the ashes of a bitter regret for what she had done. On the next morning she writ a note to Hugh, beseeching his forgiveness, and Laurel went herself to deliver it into his hands; but Hugh was gone, and neither Mistress Margaret nor her father knew where. One of the prentices, however, gave the information that he had gone to enlist once more in his old regiment, the war having then broke out afresh. It is nearly quenched again now, the Cavalier standards having been unfurled and their drooping spirits raised, mostly for naught.

Colonel Lovelace, who headed the rising in his native county of Kent, was taken prisoner, and is confined, with his brother, at Petre House, in Aldersgate, close to where my sister, Peg Bagshaw, lives. General Fairfax is besieging Colchester, and only a few days ago there was fierce fighting not far from this peaceful spot. The Lord Francis Villiers,

that incomparably gallant and beautiful boy, being overcome by the rebels, would ask no quarter, and, facing them, with his back against a tree on Kingston highway, received ten mortal wounds. So the Angel of Death is still busy in our distracted country, though since I first writ in these pages it hath never drawn so near to me and mine as now, when my husband's sweet child lies slowly a-dying.

Laurel cannot believe it. She thinks, if only she could find out where Hugh is, and bring him to Silence to forgive her for the mischief she wrought that April evening, her loved one would recover. I do not tell her that I know better, and that 'tis easier to break hearts than to mend them.

August 13.

At sunset yesterday, when all the sky was aglow with a golden glory, and the sweet scents of evening coming through the casement, Silence died. A minute before she had raised herself in the little bed. Her lips moved as if she would have spoken, and she seemed to be listening. Laurel verily believes that in death Lady Eleanor's prophecy was fulfilled: that Silence's ears were 'unstopped and her tongue loosed.'

'She can hear music now, and loves it,' said Laurel, 'and is speaking and singing with the angels.'

'Tis some comfort to Laurel in her sore grief to think this, as it is to feel that Silence saw Hugh before she died.

'Twas a week ago that Laurel met Hugh by a strange accident, with some others of his brigade, at ease in the lane on which the Grange gates open. In his musqueteer dress, splashed with the mud of the highway, he came into the little white chamber, with the window looking out on the garden and the woodlands, wherein Silence lay, and dropped on his knees beside the bed. Too spent, for she had just been let blood, to converse in the old signs, she could only fix her eyes on his face; and when she had satisfied herself that he had forgiven her, or perhaps had never been angry with her at all, tears of joy rolled down her wasted cheeks. She put out her hand, and stroked caressingly the bowed tawny head of this foster-brother, the hero of her tender childhood, the one love of her silent, inscrutable maidenhood. Then, with her other hand, she drew Laurel's face down to rest by hers on the pillow.

'Console each other when I am gone,' her eyes seemed to say.

I looked out on the sunny landscape, and watched the purple shadows come and go on the rippling cornfields beyond the fence. A pair of wood-pigeons

were cooing in a fir-tree near the window, and made the only sounds that broke the stillness.

My thoughts went back to the snowy January day on which these three, with their dogs, squirrel, and parrot, had arrived at the Gray House from Blois. Somehow, instead of the greensward of the Grange, I saw the snow-covered grass plot at home—a red-haired boy leaning over the sundial, and an active, swift, darting little figure being restrained from flying to him. I heard Laurel's clear young voice command, 'Come back, Hugh! Silence wants you. Silence wants you.' Methinks that hath been the cry of Laurel's soul always. But now Silence's heart's desire is stilled. She wants Hugh no longer, for she lies in her last tranquil sleep at rest—she who once was so full of restless, eager life, as if she had been compelled to find vent in movement for all that her speechlessness withheld.

The chamber is sweet with the fairest flowers and herbs of late summer, which Laurel has heaped around her beloved dead. A white rose is clasped in her marble hands. The border skirting the terrace without is crimson with love-lies-bleeding. Within love lies dead, white, pure, and peaceful.

This morning Hugh came again, and looked at Silence in her dead beauty. 'Twas but for a few

minutes he tarried, for at ten of the clock he was to fall in with some of the Yellow Regiment at Putney to march to the trenches before Colchester. My husband was too plunged in grief for the loss of his fair daughter to speak with Hugh, but Laurel and I walked with him to the gates. Laurel's was a tearless sorrow, and 'twas more distressing than if she had wept and wailed.

She had not said a word to Hugh till he took her hand, and murmured a husky good-bye. Then she broke forth in bitter speech :

'Now, Hugh, you may go and pledge your troth with Mistress Margaret. There is no longer a reason why I should not give you both my blessing and come to your wedding. I was all but saying "dance at it," but I warrant there is nought that's so sinful as dancing permitted at Puritan marriage-feasts. I wish you joy, Hugh, with all my heart.'

Her words roused some emotion in Hugh that his customary self-restraint was powerless to master. It seemed as if he was so stung to the quick that, though he fain would hold his tongue, he could not.

'Why talk of weddings now, and to me?' he asked. 'Even if I had a mind, as some have, to plight troth for convenience with one when they love another, 'twere not possible in my case. My apprenticeship is at an end: I return no more to

Master Haynes; and when this second war is over I start on my travels, and one day, maybe, shall settle and ply my trade at Blois. But first I would meet with my enemy again. He whom I stood weakly by and saw saved from a just retribution because it was you who saved him. Something has grown up in my heart like a hideous gourd, choking by degrees all high spiritual striving and nobler feelings. Methinks the devil must have planted the seed there, and God has forsaken me. I have prayed, but the only prayer that passes my lips is for revenge, that I may not let another chance slip, that my enemy may once more be delivered into my hands.'

Laurel looked at him with strained, horrified eyes.

'Have you forgot, Hugh,' she cried—'forgot that your enemy is your father?'

'Nay, 'tis because he is my father that he is doubly my enemy. Can I love and honour the father who made my mother suffer ere I breathed? 'Twas his cruelty robbed me of my mother. For that, without knowing him, I think I have hated him all my life.'

'Twas terrible to see how his wrath transformed him. One would hardly have known him for the same youth who, but half an hour ago, had entered the presence of the dead, with reverent steps and

head humbly bent, as if he came into the Holy of Holies.

‘But you were not without a mother’s love. Our mother nurtured you as her own, and we—we loved you.’

The bitter note in Laurel’s voice had melted now into infinite tenderness, and at sound of it the fierce glitter died from Hugh’s red-brown eyes.

‘Forgive me! My boyhood was blessed indeed; the ties of blood could not be dearer and sweeter than those that bound me to my foster-sisters. I am not such a monster of ingratitude as to forget them, except when *this*’—he put his hand to the back of his head on the place where he had been wounded in the strange affray with the man who had proved to be his father—‘when *this* drives all recollections but one from my mind, and maddens my brain. It hath changed me. ’Tis because of it that I have shunned lately those I most loved. In sooth, it has made me thoughtless, or I should have told *her*’—reverently he raised his eyes in the direction of the little casement—‘surely I should have told her I minded not the breaking of that toy. ’Tis well you should know the worst of me—how evil I’ve grown to be. And now, farewell.’

He stooped, kissing first mine and then Laurel’s hand. The next moment he was gone.

‘Oh, why did I speak those taunting words, mother? Why was I so wroth? I would fain call him back now ’tis too late. To let him go away thus will but harden his heart the more against his enemy—his father. ’Tis dreadful to think on’t. He cannot be wicked—Hugh! He was always good to Silence, and patient with her. If he broke her heart, he did not mean to do it. Ay, I would fain call him back. She loved him so—she loved him so!’

And Laurel laid her proud head, like a broken flower, on my shoulder, and burst out a-weeping. I was relieved to see her tears come at last, but methought she wept more for Hugh than for Silence—Silence, whom she deems happy listening to the music of the angels. Laurel vows she will try not to mourn too much for Silence.

AT THE GRAY HOUSE,
CHANCERY LANE,

September, 1648.

The rains being so heavy, and the country dreary, we took leave of our Kingston kinsfolk and returned home soon after Silence was buried beneath the shadow of the yews in the quiet churchyard. Gabriel hath designed a little cross of fair white stone to mark her grave. Methinks my husband looks many years older since this loss has so saddened him. He speaks of it little, and has gone back to his dear

books, and is as much occupied as heretofore in writing, translating, and visiting the booksellers on London Bridge, Paul's Churchyard, and elsewhere. Be the weather foul or fine, he will go forth daily a-book-hunting, even if it be only as far as the turnstile in Holborn. Yet he may do this and never forget for one minute the sweet child he left under the sward at Kingston.

'Twas a sad home-coming without Silence, and great was my little Viking's grief when we made him understand that the mute playmate, whom he held in such fondness, would never make him any more story-pictures with her needle or romp with him again. He doth check himself with difficulty in his quaint infant prayers, where he was wont to ask God to bless Silence. 'I forgot,' says he, 'Silence is with God now, and He will keep her and not let her come back to Olave and Marie any more.' And then he goes on with his prayer as usual.

How odd it sounded that night we came home to hear cried in the streets news from the North of General Cromwell's vanquishing and slaughtering of the Scots, when 'twas these very Scots who were his stout allies at the great victory of Marston Moor four years ago. And now this second war, which hath been ill-starred for the Royalists from the first, is over; for at the end of the last month the

besieged in Colchester, reduced to sore extremities, having long lived on horseflesh, yielded themselves to the conquerors, and the two brave officers who had defended the town with such valour, Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle, were shot to death on the walls by order of General Ireton.

The King is in the Isle of Wight, a prisoner at Carisbrook Castle, where the Governor, Colonel Hammond, serves the Parliament rather than the army, and again commissioners have gone hence to enter into treaty with His Majesty at Newport ; but 'twill end in smoke, as all other negotiations have done.

Some are even daring to petition that the King shall be brought to trial for the great bloodshed and calamity 'tis said his tyranny have caused the nation.

I think not any of my brother Roger's escapades hath angered and disgusted me more than his turning his coat as he hath done ; for he is now in the service and pay of those very men he fought against in the field. None the less is he in high favour with his stepmother in Hart Street, and she doth lavish on him indulgences and endearments when he is there that he but ill deserves. Naught of his bold and wicked scheme to carry off Laurel by force is known in Hart Street ; for when it came out,

Gabriel desired that my father should not be told, as it would but add to his cares and sorrows and serve no purpose.

'Tis likely enow they thought me stiff and cold, when, dining there yesterday, I found Roger of the party. But he was not in any way abashed at seeing me, and discoursed with his old bravado on all the current topics, and airily explained his change of views.

Madam and he bandied compliments, and it provoked me much to hear them. Her godson, quoth she, had been her first love in the family, and never had there been a prettier countenance or a sweeter curly pate than his at three years old. Not Will or Tim or even Jack had been fit to hold a candle to him at that age.

'And now, alack! of the whole bunch none is so unhandsome, inside and out, as I am. Ask sister Lovejoy.' He laughed across at me with bold, unflinching eyes.

'And how fond you were in those days of ginger tangies gilded with kissing comfits!' went on madam with in consequence. 'Dost remember stealing two from my blue delf jar? Nay, but you were nine years, and old enough to know better, when you ate too freely at my table of a jumbal of apricots, and had to be dosed for it afterwards.'

'I recollect well how delicious 'twas. Would such jumbals were made nowadays!' Roger said.

'Well, look inside that chafing-dish, and you'll see they are——'

So they went on thus foolishly trifling, my father paying no heed, but scoring down an air that had occurred to him on a piece of music-paper beside his plate. If they both belong to the serious party from 'conscience sake,' as they say, one would not judge it so from their light converse.

And the outer aspect of my old home is so changed under the reign of my father's second wife. Methinks he might as well have moved to her house in Seething Lane as let her so transform the familiar, simple chambers. The buff wainscot is hid by hangings far too rich and heavy for the size of the parlour—traps for dust, Penelope grumbles—and all the dear old music-books have been banished to make way for ivory figures, Chinese puzzles, and sandal-wood workboxes and the like. The pompous presence of madam's great-grandfather, who was Lord Mayor, doth fill the dining-room to oppression, his picture over the chimney being the biggest that ever I saw.

'Tis no wonder that poor Jane is sorely vexed at the thought of quitting our dear Mistress Anne Fanshawe to come to this altered home again, where she will not find her Jack, who is gone to serve as a page

in my Lord Ormond's household. When the time comes for Laurel to take her place with Mistress Anne—as she doth hope to do next year—I will ask Gabriel to let me have Jane at the Gray House to teach Olave his book.

December 29, 1648.

What a Yuletide this hath been! Not all through these years of civil strife and Puritan rule has, methinks, the festival been so shorn of every outward sign of jollity and merry-making, so shadowed and weighted by the gloom of what has been and is yet to come. The King has been brought near us again, and is at his royal castle of Windsor. God only knows what the next move will be! The vast masses of soldiers in and about London give it the look of being besieged from within and without. They are quartered on the citizens, and that same Colonel Pride, whose boast 'tis that he hath purged the Parliament by turning out all its members who are not extreme Republicans, has cleared Southwark of play-houses and closed the bear-pits. If 'twere for the bears' sake, I should be glad, for I have always abhorred that cruel pastime of bear-baiting.

On Christmas Eve we were bid to the christening of my sister Bagshaw's third babe. Peg is mighty proud of having so far outstripped me in this respect. No chiming of sweet bells on the frosty air, no

laughter and merriment from lads and lasses wreathed with greenery and mistletoe, did greet us as we came down from High Holborn and passed within the city wall. The fair Gothic spires and turrets stood dumb against the misty sky; the only sounds in the streets they soared above were the clank of spurs and sword, the groaning forth of some unmelodious psalm. In the doorways, in the windows, everywhere, were those grim, stern faces of the sectarian soldiery. They looked down on us full of threat, methought, from the lancets and battlements of ancient Aldergate, as we turned into the stately street, with its garden houses standing alone, where Gabriel hath often said he could dream he were in some town of Italy again.

The interior of Peg's home seemed bright and jocund, all decked with evergreen and sprigs of holly, after the gloom of the streets. Most of the fonts in the city churches are being used by the troopers as troughs for their horses, so we christened Peg's new babe in the parlour that is lined with shelves holding apothecary's vials and jars, containing Venice treacle, electuaries and divers other decoctions, and where hang two great charts of the circulation of the blood. We drank to the baby and its beaming parents in my stepmother's ancestral canary sack, a flagon of which had preceded hers and my father's arrival.

Madam, when she sailed into the company with a majestic air of importance, disdained to recognise Prue, who had come without her husband, and, indeed, looked very sad and different from the old sprightly, pretty Prue, in a gown of some coarse, cheap stuff. Poor Prue is repenting at leisure, I fear, the marriage she was in such haste to make, and said with a sigh, when she took Peg's eldest boy, who has just been breeched, on her knee, 'twas well she had no children.

When the ceremony was over, Master Bagshaw opened his case of viols, and my father started the music. After some fugues had been played, we gathered round the Yuletide log and sang little short songs, called canzonets, for three voices, and fal-lals for five voices, and such old ballads as 'All in a Garden Green' and 'Lord Willoughby's Welcome Home.'

In a pause 'twixt the songs Peg pushed open a lattice in the window that doth open also like a door on to the pot-herb garden which they have at the back of the small house. The parlour was overheated, she said, being narrow space for so many guests.

'And 'tis at this hour the prisoners,' added she, 'come forth from Petre House next door for their short exercise in the pleasaunce. 'Twill liven them,

perchance, if the strains of our music reach their ears. Colonel Richard Lovelace, most of all, would fain hear it. He was brought thither on my Lord Holland's defeat, and 'tis said he and his brother have lost all their moneys and property, and have come to utter ruin in serving the King. In truth, he doth look sore cast down and wretched—he who once was so gay and comely a Cavalier.'

'His captivity is not so drear as some,' her husband said. 'He is allowed the use of writing materials, and passes the time in collecting for a volume the numerous lyrics he hath writ to Lucasta.'

'She who did not wait to hear a report confirmed that he was slain in the war with the Scots ere she hastened to wed with another! A fig for his Lucasta!' Prue explained, with something of her old pert spirit. 'Methinks her constancy was so short-lived as to be unworthy of his, which is deathless.'

I recalled how Peg and Prue when they were maids had quarrelled over the little posy which Colonel Lovelace had let fall on Hampstead Common, and how scornfully Laurel had tossed it to them. But now Laurel, who had taken her lute to sing, was leaning forward, hearkening attentively to every word being said about the prisoner next door, with that curious softness that only his name can bring to her beautiful eyes.

Then she rose in her queenly grace, holding her lute in one hand, and lifting her heavy black skirts with the other.

‘I am faint,’ she murmured; ‘if the company will excuse my song, I will go into the air.’

She walked swiftly to the window, and, unfastening it, passed into the wintry gloaming.

Since Silence died my husband hath been disposed more than ever to humour any vagary of Laurel’s.

‘Follow her, dear heart,’ he whispered, ‘and see that she takes no hurt.’

I threw a cloak about me, and, with another for Laurel, went after her down the narrow pathway ’twixt the patches of herbs. ’Twas as if a magnet had drawn her to the end of the garden, where, from a mound raised slightly above the wall, ’twas possible to overlook the paved pleasaunce of Petre House on the other side. As I came up with her and put the wrap on her shoulders, Laurel struck her lute very softly, and began to sing wellnigh under her breath. ’Twas but one verse she sang of that ancient ballad of the North, but it had its effect. As the sweet low notes died, Colonel Lovelace, standing below in the shadow of the wall which was high on his side, lifted his face. Alack! how changed that face since we saw it last—pale and haggard, its brilliance faded, its

expression of debonair youth gone. Years of sorrow and affliction may pass over some without blanching a hair of their heads or changing a line of their features. With others a week, or even a night, of grievous calamity is sufficient to age and stamp despair on the countenance.

‘Can I believe my ears? Have I really heard on this chill, clouded winter eve the nightingale that my memory doth associate with a joyous Maytime in Oxon?’ ’Twas the same courteous, musical voice, but with a ring of hopelessness in it withal. ‘Sweet lady,’ it continued, ‘I pray you give me news of the King, for naught of it is permitted to reach us here.’

‘The King! Ay, ’tis not well with the King,’ answered Laurel; ‘his Majesty is in dire peril. Hundreds in this great London there are who would fain cry, “God save him!” but Cromwell’s soldiers swarm in every street, lane, and alley, ready to thrust the words back in their throats at sword-point. The Mayor the people chose this time was loyal, but the army hath sent him to the Tower. And they dare to speak of bringing the King to trial.’

‘They will judge their King? Then he is lost. Ay, and I doomed to loiter here inactive. Why was it not my happy fate to die for him, as others of his servants? Why was this broken heart not the target

for deadly bullets or thrust by sword? Why, oh, why, am I let live to be of no service to my King?’

Laurel bent far over the wall.

‘Escape,’ she urged—‘escape, Colonel Lovelace. The King hath need of his friends. They might yet do something, methinks. One such friend as you is a host in himself. No one is watching you at this moment. Surely this wall is not difficult to scale. I would give you my cloak, and through my sister’s house yonder you could get free—free to do your King glorious service again at the eleventh hour. Do not hesitate; no one is looking. The wall is easy to scale; now is the moment. But you do not move. Colonel Lovelace, you do not move.’

She spoke in rapid, breathless, eager tones, forgetful of me beside her, and all else except her mad desire to set the captive free. He only smiled sadly in response, and shook his head. The next moment the guards had come forward and seized him by the shoulder.

‘You have done your malignant friend a doubtful kindness, fair temptress,’ said the captain of the guard. ‘For this he will but lose the liberty he has enjoyed here hitherto, and be more closely confined.’

And Laurel, with a cry of distress, swayed backwards from the wall and fell swooning into my arms.

February 7.

Since I last writ anything here a great and awful tragedy has been enacted that has filled all London—nay, I should say the whole world—with horror and indignation. On January 20 the King's mock trial began in Westminster; for how could that be called a genuine trial in which the judges had no legal authority, but were, for the most part, brewers, butchers, and the like, and who had condemned His Majesty, and found him steeped in guilt before the proceedings began? The most illustrious of the King's foes, General Fairfax, held himself sternly aloof from the court, which his lady attended to make an heroic protest, to her lasting honour.

The grim Tower prison, so near us in Hart Street, with its executions, its languishing captives, its history of heart-broken sighs and tears and tragic woe, shadowed and awed our happy childhood, but naught that happened there was ever half so iniquitous and terrible as this: a King stepping from a window in his own palace, the scene of his past pomp and domestic peace, the palace that 'twas his delight to beautify with the masterpieces of art—stepping on to the scaffold to be murdered in the eyes of his subjects by masked ruffians. My Sir Oracle says they who have suffered this horrid act to be done, and have hurried the King to his end, are

guilty not only of a crime, but of a profound political error. For now the King's wrong-doing, his weak rulership and insincere dealings, will be forgot, the noble and lofty manner in which he met his dreadful death atoning for all. 'Tis not as a tyrant, but as a martyr, that his memory will live on fresh and green in the hearts of his people.

But I cannot write more of it, the murder of the King, and Laurel cannot speak of it. She hath deepened the mourning weeds she wears for Silence, and her face is most sorrowful. Last night, through the thick and fast-falling snow, a few faithful servants bore their dead King to Windsor, and buried him there in the Chapel of St. George.

XIII

CHANCERY LANE, 1651.

IT seems 'tis often the sight of my husband's kinswoman, my own dear friend Anne Fanshawe (her Dick hath been made a baronet by his master, and she is now 'my lady'), that is the cause of my taking forth this book again after a long period of neglect, to write in it once more.

How marvellously chequered and full of hazards by land and sea her life hath been, and mine in comparison doth appear but a humdrum round of homely duties. Each time we meet after a separation I could fill, not one, but several books, methinks, with the wondrous tales she tells me of escapes from shipwrecks, pirates, and robbers, of the adventures and great people she has met with in foreign towns, of ghosts and apparitions, of hardships and sickness.

When Sir Richard was sent for to Scotland out of France to wait on his young Majesty Charles Stuart as his secretary, his lady came hither with her children to a lodging in London, where she stayed

seven months, during which time I saw her nearly every day, and Laurel was with her altogether. She was much distraught, letters from her husband being few and far between; and this anxiety for his safety and the King's, and the pain she was in, prevented her from going out to take the air more than seven times in these seven months. But one bright day in June another little daughter was born to her, to be her solace in these anxious hours, and soon she was able to travel to Ware Park, the goodly seat of the Fanshawes, in Hertfordshire.

There the news was brought to her of the Battle of Worcester being fought on September 3, Oliver Cromwell winning the day, as a year before, on the same date, he had won it at Dunbar and scattered the Covenanters. The King was missing, and naught heard of Sir Richard Fanshawe being dead or alive for three days. Laurel writ that her dear lady neither slept nor eat, and trembled at every sound she heard, till the news-book came at last with Sir Richard's name among the prisoners. At once she set out for London with Laurel and her eldest little girl Nan, whom she calls the 'companion of her travels and troubles.' Her purpose was to leave Nan with us, and then to go and find out where Sir Richard was.

I took Olave and Jane, attended by Juan. We set

out betimes to see them alight from the Ware coach at the Vine in Bishopsgate. 'Twas a crisp autumn morning, and the golden sunlight shone on the roofs and steeples of the City, the sky above being blue and cloudless. I mark the weather because 'twas soon after that those rains and storms began that scarce ceased at all for many weeks.

We had hardly got nearer the Vine than St. Ethelburga's when Laurel spied us, and came running to us in much excitement.

'My dear lady has had a message by the way,' she exclaimed, 'and 'tis from Sir Richard. He bids her take a room at Charing Cross, for he will be brought by there to-day, and his keeper will let him rest as a great favour at dinner-time in my lady's company, so she has bestirred herself to go thither forthwith to engage a room and order a dinner. She wishes us to follow, and we shall find her father and many other friends there.'

We turned about and took coach for Charing Cross, and, coming near it, I saw my dear friend holding her little Nan by the hand, standing on the steps of an ordinary opposite the Cross. She beckoned to us, and bid us come into the private room she had taken that looked on the street. The table was already spread with cold meats and neats' tongues and Rhenish wine.

‘Prompt as ever to obey instructions,’ I said, as I embraced her.

‘How could I be other than prompt,’ replied she with shining eyes, ‘when ’tis such a joy to have instructions to obey?’

Then Sir John Harrison and Margaret came, and others of their intimate acquaintance, and at eleven of the clock we all went to the windows, for word came the prisoners were being brought up. Hundreds there were of them, both English and Scotch, footsore and weary from the march, and what rags yet clung to them stained with blood and thick with dust.

A well-known, clear-toned, jovial voice sounded in our ears :

‘Pray let us lose no time, for I know not how much I have to spare. This is the chance of war. Nothing venture, nothing have, so let us sit down and be merry whilst we may.’

And Sir Richard’s tall figure stood in our midst. He greeted each one of us cheerfully, kissed his wife, and tossed Nan to his shoulder. A most chivalrous, gallant gentleman he looked, despite the hardships he had suffered ; and how light he made of them to dry Anne’s tears, which, said he, were the only things on earth could move him !

He sat down at the table, with his Nan nestling to

his side, and his wife smiling at him through her tears, and hanging on his lips as he told us something of his adventures.

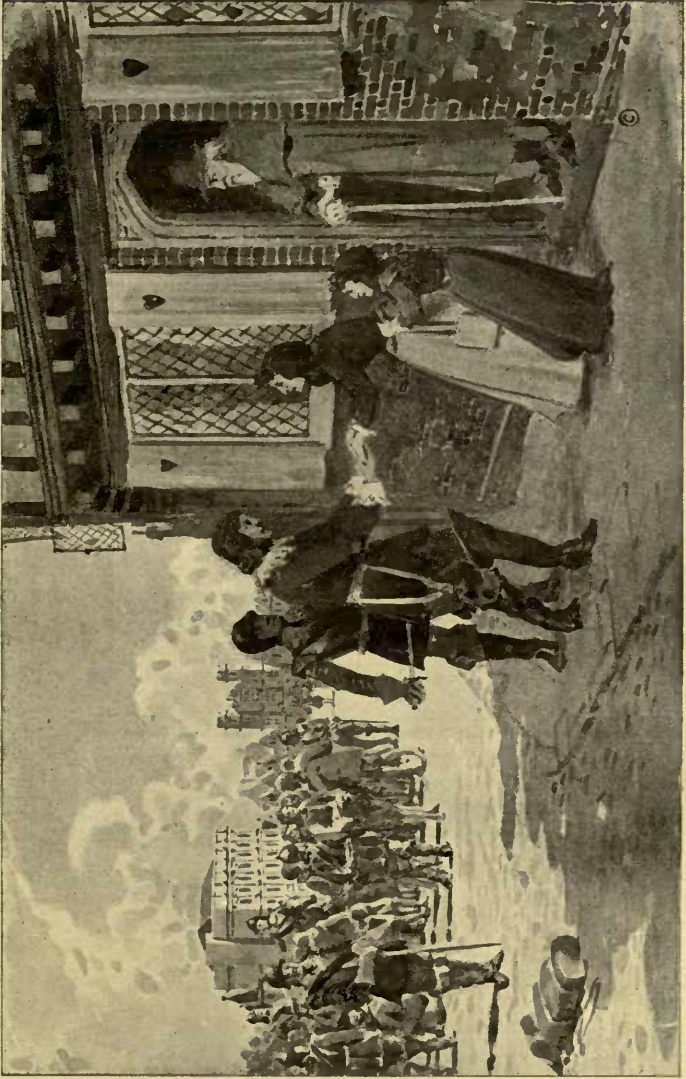
His captain had been very kind to him, Sir Richard said, and people had offered him money on the march, and brought him good things to eat. Lady Denham, of Borstall House, would have given him all the money in her purse, but he craved of her instead a shirt or two and some handkerchiefs. She had fetched him, then, two smocks of her own, and some handkerchiefs, saying she was ashamed to give him her own; but having none of her sons at home, she desired him to wear them.

So the precious time, all too short, passed, until the order came that Sir Richard was to be carried to Whitehall to his prison on the bowling-green.

Tenderly he withdrew himself from the clinging arms of his wife and child, and as he took leave of me he was pleased to say, with a cheery smile :

‘I shall be easy in my mind about my dear wife, knowing she is to be lodged with you, for the present, in Chancery Lane. At her cousin Young’s she is always in good keeping.’

This was six weeks ago, and still Sir Richard is pent up in that one small, close room on the bowling-green at Whitehall, not allowed to breathe the air or to hold speech with any; and into sad ill-health hath



SIR RICHARD FANSHAWE A PRISONER AT CHIRING CROSS.

he fallen, from exposure to cold and the long, hard marches of that last ill-starred rally for the Stuarts.

‘Love laughs at locksmiths,’ and Sir Richard’s loving, brave wife hath found a way of holding speech with him, however much the powers forbid it. When four of the clock booms from the steeples in these chill, damp mornings of the wettest autumn that ever I knew, constantly is her footstep heard descending the stair, and she goes forth with a dark lantern in her hand. All alone and on foot she speeds along the sleeping Strand, and, coming to Whitehall, doth enter the bowling-green from King Street. Once there, she steals beneath his window, and softly calls to him, and he, putting out his head at the sound of the dear voice, they talk together.

’Twas but this morning, when the rain beat fiercely against the lattices, that I heard her go. I rose early, and went to write beside the big hearth in the hall to await her return.

She came in a-laughing.

‘The mermaid’s come back, Lovejoy!’ said she. ‘I vow I am so wet the raindrops have gone in at my neck and out at my heels!’

I went with her to her chamber to help her to put on dry raiment.

‘I have often rid for miles and miles in such rain as this in the days that I was a hoyting girl. You

remember those days?' she asked. 'Well, methinks 'tis what remains of the hoyting girl spirit in me carries me through.'

'Through dangers of plunderings, ship-wreckings, the plague, naked swords, and drownings,' said I, referring to some of her experiences abroad and in Ireland.

'Yes,' she said, 'I was the hoyting girl again when, sailing for Spain, I borrowed the cabin boy's blue thrum cap and tarred coat for half a crown, and crept up to the deck to stand beside my husband, who thought I was locked up in the cabin, the captain having ordered no woman to show herself, because our ship was threatened by a Turkish galley, and, had they seen women, the Turks would have boarded us and made us all slaves! With *him* I am ever fearless. 'Tis parting and separation from him that makes a coward of me.'

And then she left off wringing the damp out of her hair, and suddenly all the fatigues of her early expedition to Whitehall through the rain seemed to overcome her. Her voice grew weary, her face white and wan, and I besought her to repose herself till evening.

But long ere that she was come forth from her chamber, sprightly and gay once more. She joined

in a romp with her little Nan and my Olave, who says when he is grown a man he shall like well to marry Nan. Later, at fall of dusk, she sat in the gloaming light, with her two adoring handmaidens, Laurel and Jane, at her feet, and did enthral and thrill them with that wondrous weird tale of the woman with red hair and ghastly complexion whom she had woke up in the night to see in the moonlight leaning in at the window casement, and heard call thrice for a horse; which happened when she and Sir Richard lay at the Lady Honor O'Brien's, in Ireland. I had heard her relate it before, but methinks I could hear it many times as she tells it and never fail to shudder thereat.

November 30.

Great hath been our joy at the Gray House these last few days, for our dear kinswoman, Lady Fanshawe's, unwearying efforts in addressing the Lord Protector on her husband's behalf have been crowned with success at last, and he has been released on bail. Dr. Bathurst, who is physician to Cromwell as well as to us and the Fanshawe family, gave him a certificate that he would come near to die of the scurvy if he lay much longer in the close little prison at Whitehall.

He is lodged with us till such time as he journeys

to the Bath for his scorbutic. 'Twas a touching sight to see his wife and little daughter's delight at greeting him. Nan went nigh wild. Methinks no man was ever so well loved by his relatives and friends as is this most kind and gallant gentleman. Troops of them come daily to visit him here, and to congratulate him on having gotten loose. Alphonse hath killed the fatted calf, and more company have dined and supped with us than ever heretofore. The discourse is very lively, and much of books and authors.

Mr. John Evelyn, a cousin of Sir Richard's, has come out of Paris recently. During the wars he travelled over Europe, and he hath a great interest for all that concerns art and music, and rare manuscripts and intaglios such as Gabriel collects. He talked of his translation of Lucretius, and Sir Richard said so long as he has leisure, for the present he will employ it in turning into Latin verse Fletcher's 'Faithful Shepherdess,' to make known in other countries that pearl of pastorals, as he called it.

XIV

Tuesday, May 29, 1660.

COMING in this day from witnessing such rejoicings as belike have never before been in London town, I was so stirred that I methought me of my old journal, and took it forth from the chest where it has lain now for years—most of those years, indeed, during which we lived under a Protectorate and the rule of a usurper.

As I turned over the pages to see if there was yet some space left whereon to write, they seemed as a tale that is told. But though the 'march of events' that I set out to record in this book soon after my marriage has gone on bringing changes till it hath wrought to-day the most wondrous change of all, methinks my own life has little altered.

I still dwell in this fair home, happy in the unchanging affection and goodness of my husband; and if God has blessed me with but one child, he is a jewel beyond price, grown in beauty and wisdom as he hath in stature, and I have been spared the pain

of bearing sweet babes but to lose them, which sorrow hath befallen my sisters and my brothers' wives, and many times my dear Lady Fanshawe.

My Sir Oracle's hair is white as snow, but his eyes have ever the keen young look in them. As we stood by our dear lady to-day in the Strand, where her niece Fanshawe lies, to see the King's splendid entry with his brothers, the Dukes of York and Gloucester, she declared that I yet might be taken for my husband's daughter and Laurel's younger sister. Sister maybe, but younger sister I would not allow, though 'tis true time hath given my poor Laurel the air of carrying about with her some hidden trouble which hath robbed her brown beauty of its youthful roundness and brilliance. Yet, for all that, her face is none the less lovely for being thoughtful, and to me it hath a charm now that it did not possess in her merry youth. People wonder much that Laurel is still a maid.

The seven years that Sir Richard and Lady Fanshawe were in England, being all that time under constraint more or less from the regicides, we had them often with us here in Chancery Lane. But they preferred the country to the town; and Laurel was with them and their three children at Tankersley Park, a seat of my Lord Strafford's in Yorkshire, where they planted fruit-trees, and Sir Richard trans-

lated the 'Lusiade' of De Camoens. 'Twas there they lost their dearly-beloved ten-year-old daughter Nan, who was so tall and witty for her years—the dear companion of her mother's travels and sorrows, as she often said. She died of the small-pox; and there is another little Nan now, but methinks she can never quite take the place of the first in her mother's heart.

After the death of the Lord Protector Cromwell, which happened appropriately enow on a stormy September night, when so fierce a tempest raged that oaks and elms were uprooted and houses blown down, Sir Richard applied for release from his bail, and under pretence of becoming tutor to a young nobleman on his travels, he was allowed to leave England. The exiled King appointed him Master of the Requests and Latin Secretary. He sent for his lady to bring the children to Paris for their education last summer, but her cousin, Henry Neville, one of the High Court of Justice, refused to grant her a passport.

This refusal, however, did not daunt my courageous friend's spirit. Ready to sail by the next tide, she hastened to Wallingford House, the office where they gave passes. Clad in a plain habit and assuming a very humble mien and vulgar mode of speech, she did desire to be given a pass for Paris to go to her

husband. 'Woman, what is your husband and your name?' she was asked, and replied with many courtesies: 'He is a young merchant, and my name is Anne Harrison.' She was told 'twould cost her a crown. 'A great sum for me to pay, truly, but pray put down a man, my maid, and three children,' she answered. And the fellow gave her the pass filled in as she wished, assuring her that a malignant would gladly have paid him five pounds for it. How radiant with triumph she looked, her fair curls escaped from her hood, as she came to me here in the carnation closet waving the pass high up in the air, and exclaiming: 'I was in despair, but I prayed, and God put this into my head! A pen, Lovejoy—a pen!' I handed her my quill, and with deft strokes she made the great H of Harrison into *ff*, and the *rr*'s an *n*, and the *i* an *s*, and the *s* an *h*, and the *o* an *a*, and the *n* a *w*. She then hired a barge, and we all went to the Stairs with her to wish her and her little family God-speed. Afterwards she wrote that at Dover the searchers had demanded her pass, and, after scanning it, had said: 'Madam, you may go where you please.' But one added: 'I little thought they would give a pass to so great a malignant, especially in so troublesome a time.' And so she got safely to Calais.

Wonderful are Anne's nimble wits and resource-

fulness in emergency, and her buoyancy withal, so that one who saw her bright face beaming from its festal bravery in that gala crowd for the first time this morning might well think she had known naught of griefs and trials and separations from the gallant statesman and scholar, her adored husband, who hath come home with the King to enjoy high honours and His Majesty's favour, of which none, truly, is more deserving than he. The devoted pair, pray God, may now never be parted more.

She, being our ever true kinswoman and friend, although she only arrived in London on Sunday night at a house in the Savoy, did hurry immediately to the Gray House to tell me of their wondrous voyage. I cannot refrain from repeating her description, so vivid, so joyous—'twas so full of the new hopes that have been born in our long distracted country.

'Who can express the joy and gallantry of that voyage?' said she. 'To see so many great ships, the best in the world; to hear the trumpets and all other music; to see near a hundred brave vessels sail before the wind with vast cloths and streamers, the neatness and cleanness of the decks, the strength and jollity of the mariners, the gallantry of the commanders, the vast plenty of all sorts of provisions; but, above all, the glorious majesties of the King and his two

brothers, were so beyond man's expectation and expression. The sea was calm, the moon shone at full, and the sun suffered not a cloud to hinder his prospect of the best sight, by whose light and the merciful bounty of God the King was set safely on shore; and so great were the acclamations and numbers of people that it reached like one street from Dover to Whitehall.'

Her words, perforce, made me see it all with her eyes as plain as I saw with my own, standing beside her, to-day's great spectacle. Twenty thousand horse and foot brandishing their swords and shouting with joy; the flower-strewed streets hung with tapestry; fountains running with wine; the Mayor and Aldermen and all their company in their liveries and chains of gold; the lords and nobles dazzling in cloth of gold, silver, and velvet; the windows and balconies crowded with fair women, laughing down on the black-haired King, with his beetle-brows and gracious smiles, his jewels and gold lace aflash in the May sunlight. The King who hath passed his youth on battlefields, in wanderings and exile, happily restored to the throne, without one drop of bloodshed, by the same rebel army that brought his father of blessed memory to the block. What a mightily marvellous thing 'tis to reflect on! It makes one feel to be living in a romance, methinks, rather than in real

life. As on my bridal day, looking on the sullen faces that lined the streets, I had asked my husband where all the loyal folk were hiding, so to-day I might have inquired where the disloyalists were, for not one was to be seen in all those happy, shouting multitudes. In troth, this is the swinging back of the pendulum at last, that my Sir Oracle prophesied near seventeen years ago. General Monk, who expelled the 'Rump' at Candlemas, and made way for the Free Parliament that voted His Majesty's restoration, hath been but the accidental instrument in the hand of God.

I had writ so far when I laid down my quill, for Laurel came softly in, and, kneeling by me, said :

'Mother, read this.'

She laid a missive on my lap in the handwriting of Mistress Margaret—now Mistress Halkett, she having wed, some years back, an Anabaptist preacher of that name.

'MISTRESS LAUREL,

'Fain would I double your gladness on this, for you, auspicious day. Hugh l'Estrange is again in London. He sought me out, and I have had long converse with him. His great love for yourself, Mistress Laurel, is undying. Long ago "his enemy

was delivered into his hands"; but the Lord softened his heart, and in the Hôpital de Charité in Paris, where he lay destitute and at the point of death, Hugh was reconciled with his father and closed his eyes. Thus the Lord saw fit to dispel that sore weight of dark thoughts of vengeance that had so burdened and embittered his soul, setting up a barrier 'twixt him and you.

'He knows not that I write this to you, but, perforce, I must do it. He would never approach you uninvited, being so exceeding modest, notwithstanding that the dials he hath designed and set up abroad, especially one in the garden of a Duke in Italy, have brought him great renown. And 'tis likely my father will have the dial on order for the privy garden at Whitehall fashioned after his old prentice's designing.

'Pardon my boldness, Mistress Laurel, in thus advising you of Hugh's return, because it may be for but a short while that he tarries here, and if he came and went and you saw him not, methinks you would be sorry.

'MARGARET HALKETT.'

Whilst I read these lines Laurel's eyes rested on the 'Miracle of St. Olave,' which Silence had wrought so ingeniously, with myriad strands of glowing silk and threads of gold.

‘ Not for *her* sake now, mother,’ said she, ‘ but for my own. I am glad, so glad, that Hugh has come back.’

The reflection from the bonfires blazing along the streets and from the heights around was on her face as she lifted it to mine, and gave a ruddy tinge to the nut-brown hair. In her eyes was that old look of melting tenderness, which long ago was wont only to visit them at sight or mention of him who had been so shining and chivalrous a figure, endowed with such rare gifts of mind and body, him who was beloved by men and women alike, the Sir Philip Sidney of his time. Yet no glorious, gallant end was his. Broken in health and fortunes, scorning to live on the charity of his friends, but unable to live without it, he shunned their company, and gradually sank into penury and despair. In some shabby haunt of thieves, debtors, and mendicants the loyal soldier-poet, the admired author of ‘*Lucasta*,’ breathed his last, little more than a year before this happy restoration of His Majesty Charles II., for whose father he did suffer all manner of reverses, except that, belike, he most coveted—death on the field.

‘ Nought is there under heaven’s wide hollowness
That moves more dear compassion of mind
Than beauty brought to unworthy wretchedness.’

Well might these words of Master Spenser have

come into my mind that day when in the street I was about to offer alms to one I took to be a beggar, and on looking nearer, to my pitiful dismay, I recognised in the gaunt features and wasted form the Cavalier of once surpassing grace, Richard Lovelace.

The softness in Laurel's eyes was not for him tonight. Methinks the bright image so long imprinted on it hath for ever faded from her heart, and it yearns alone for her foster-brother.

THE END

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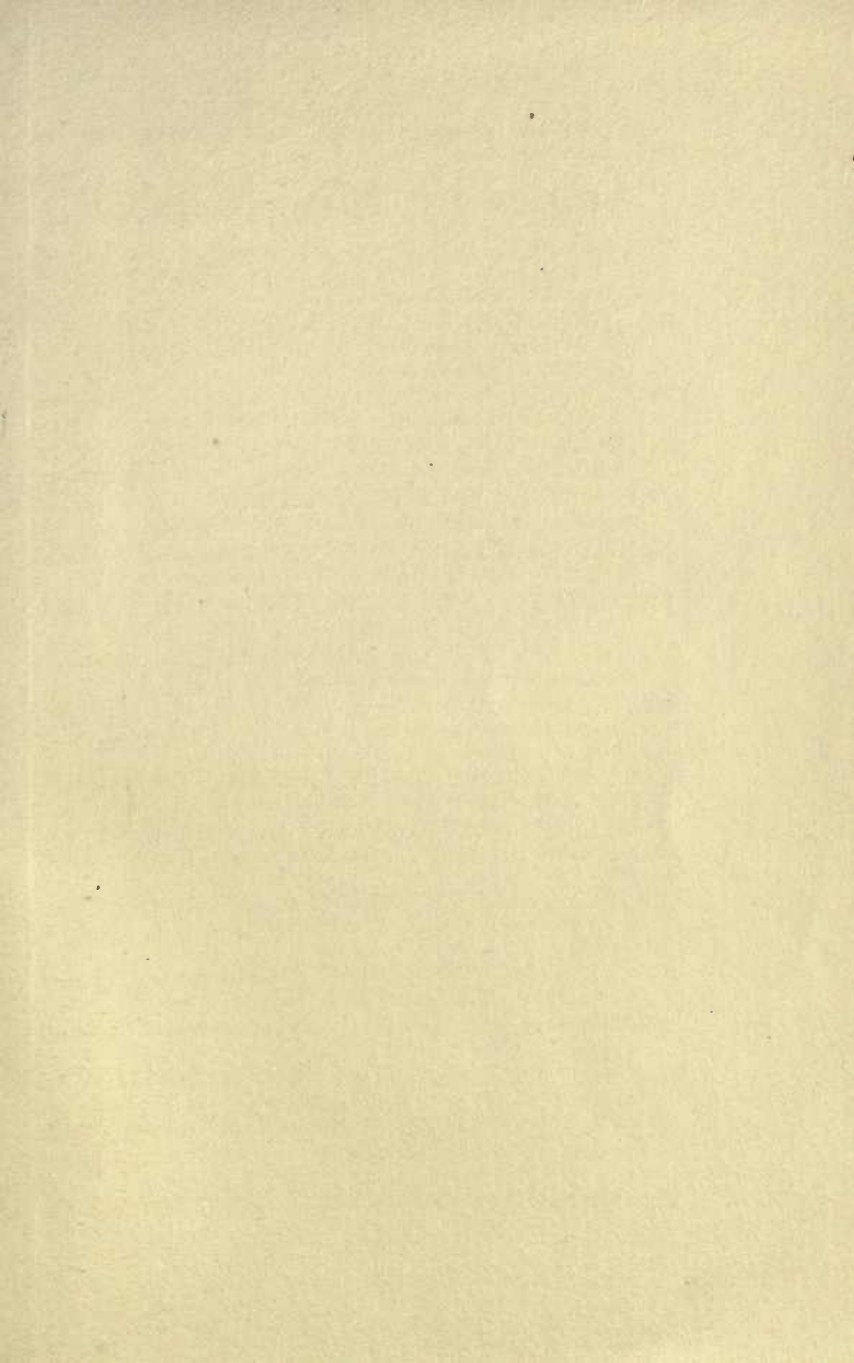
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